Hugh Hefner: Lonely and Looking for Love

Esquire

AUGUST 1998

Women We Love

Helen Hunt

Ashley Judd
Heather Graham
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Raised as a sharecropper from Marion, Mississippi, Cora Fluker celebrates life with a voice that ranges from the cold, hard truth of a SAXOPhone to 19th century slave gospel. Very fitting, since today she is an anointed preacher and mother of the church, THE FLUKER CHAPEL. All are invited to hear her music of Life.



A fan of low-down, hard-stompin', railroad-smokin' blues, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins' feel-good sessions in the late 50s and early 60s may have ignited the spark that fueled the British Invasion. She'll tell you, "People are impressed to see a black woman play like a man." A guitar slinger from birth, she performs on the streets of Atlanta by BLOWING crowds away with her unadulterated brand of blues.

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Once the owner of dozens of snakes, an ape, a monkey, raccoons, porcupines and a rooster that jumped her and became snake food, Willa Mae Buckner – also known as the SNAKE LADY – was a traveling tent-show performer who first toured with DIAMOND Teeth Mary's minstrel show. She danced in a chorus line. She started playing piano at 21 and guitar at 35. She sang the blues. She stripped at midnight rambles. She says, "I guess I never hit the big time because I never did stick to one thing too long." She played the big town, New York City, in 1997 at age 75.

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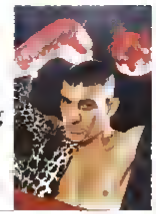
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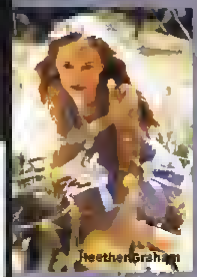
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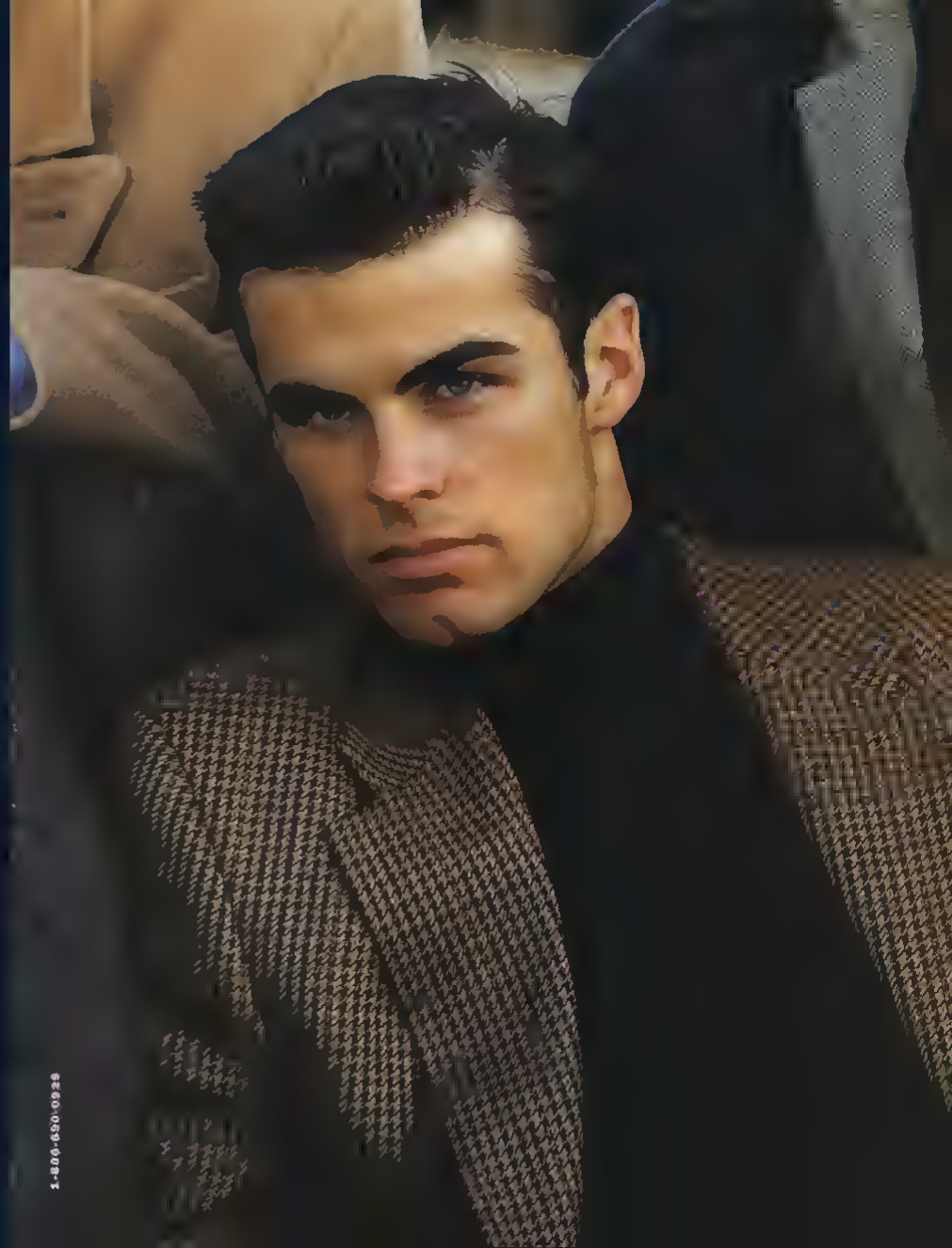
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Esquire

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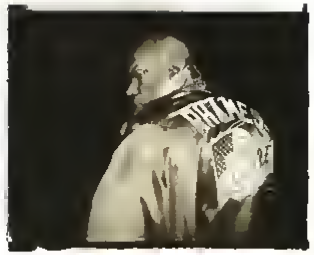
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the sound and the fury

Brotherly Love

In putting together Brothers, the special June edition of Esquire, which explored in words and pictures the ties among male siblings, we felt we collected some important stories. Our readers showed us they had some of their own.

As a longtime reader of Esquire, I was moved to tears by the poignant Brothers issue. I can't imagine a greater bond existing among men. Perhaps it is reaching age fifty that allows me to finally mourn the loss of my brother, who died just a few days after his birth. He is the one person who would have brought me into that band of brothers.

—Alan M. Smith
Escondido, Calif.

I want to commend you on a magazine that truly struck many of the chords of the special bond of brotherhood. My younger brother, Jon, became the omniscient, always better "older" brother. I spent my childhood trying to win his attention, beat him in sports, and earn his approval. Now years later, Jon is still the yardstick by which I measure myself. He will never know how deeply he has touched my heart, my mind, and my soul. Thank you for showcasing the very thing that has made me who I am: family.

—Matt Kirchner
Santa Barbara, Calif.

The Brothers issue is simply brilliant. Writing like that makes daunting the prospect of stringing thought and word together on paper. Growing up, I never had a brother. Today, my older sister leaves messages on my machine: "Pablo, it's your big brother." She is fourteen months my senior, which resulted in our being taken for twins a lot back then. It also gave her the upper hand physically during adolescence. I still have a scar on my knuckle from a fistfight I lost to her when I was ten. A few years later, she introduced me to Esquire. So let's not forget those who stepped up to the plate when no brother made the cut.

—Paul Yeuell
Malibu, Calif.

Crowing About the Rooster

While many of the stories in the Brothers issue touched the heart, David Sedaris's profile of his unconventional brother, Paul, aka the Rooster ("You Can't Kill the Rooster"), was much more a whack to the funny bone.

Your Brothers issue was fascinating reading. I laughed out loud all the way through Sedaris's story. As a forty-seven-year-old mother of two small children, I am probably not your average reader. But I find your articles more interesting and informative than and very different from those in most women's magazines. Sedaris is very refreshing. Perhaps we could all take a pointer or two from his outlook on life.

—Kathy Negrey
Williamsburg, Va.

I thoroughly enjoyed your Brothers issue, and Sedaris's article was a wonderful combination of tenderness and laugh-out-loud humor. I've read it three times to date.

—Mark Brady
Dix Hills, N.Y.

Sedaris's article was the funniest story I can recall reading. I have known Paul and his family for several years, and I have a great appreciation for his character. Paul is, without a doubt, the funniest and most candid person I have ever met. And, as the article states, you truly won't find anyone more loyal than Silly P (his corporate name). Thank God "you can't kill the Rooster"! All the [expletive frequently used by Paul deleted] would be a lot better off if they had a brother or friend just like him.

—Shane Lance
Black Mountain, N.C.

Passion Players

Meanwhile, in the May cover story ("This Man Can Play"), Denzel Washington talked to writer John Edgar Wideman about life, fatherhood, and, of course, Spike Lee's flick He Got Game.



For a die-hard follower of basketball, it was nice to see recognition that the game certainly does flourish outside the overhyped, overcommercialized megalith we know as the National Basketball Association. I smile every time I pass New York City's West Fourth Street Courts, a place filled with college has-beens, NBA near-misses, and aspiring high school wannabes. They are there for the love of the game, without the millions sometimes offered in its place. And, man, do they have game!

—Chris Gebhart
Cambridge, Mass.

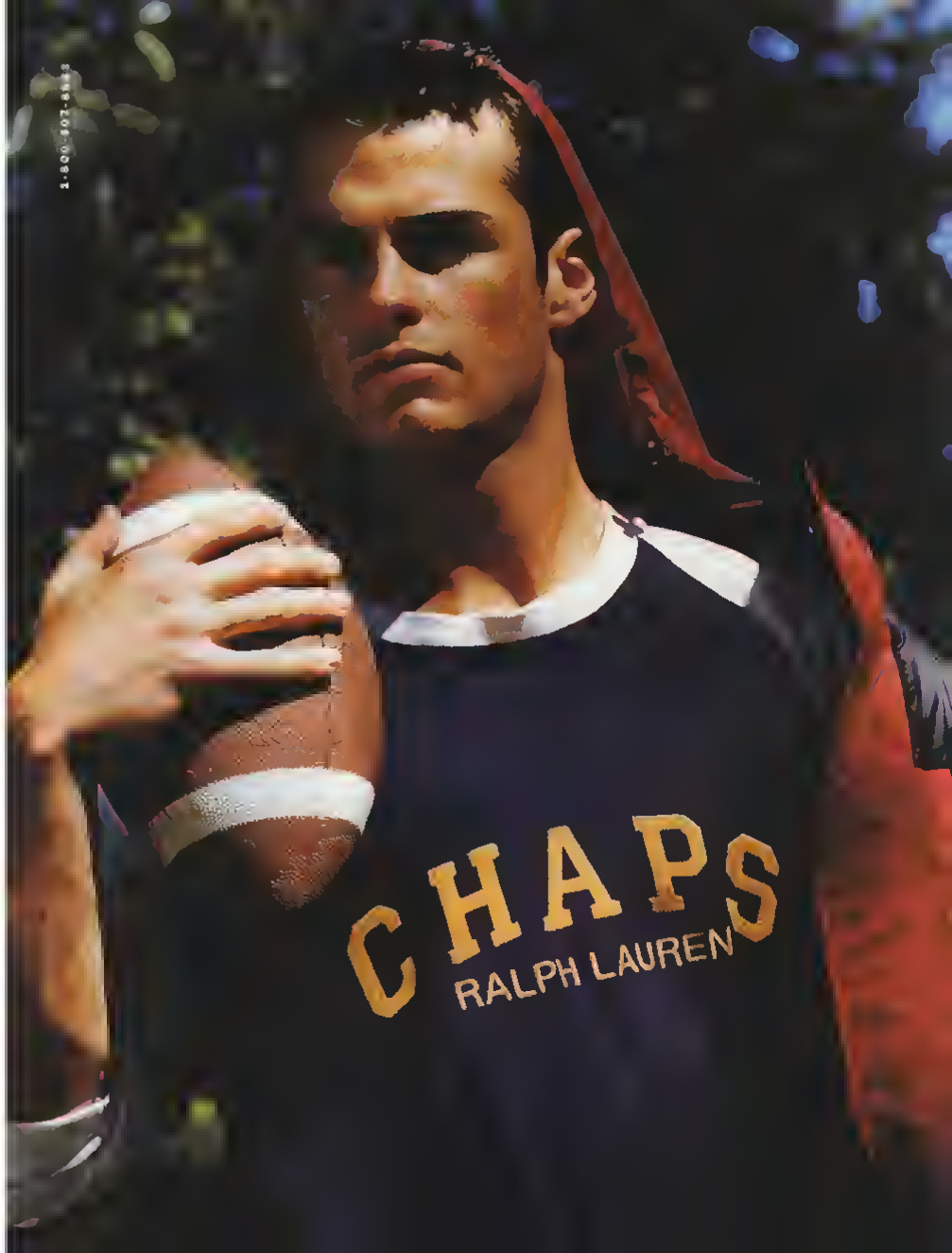
The Real McCain

Also in the May issue, writer Charles P. Pierce dissected Senator John McCain's dance with virtue and politics ("John McCain Walks on Water").

As a former Democratic congressional press secretary, I am not yet sure how I feel about Senator McCain, but as Pierce's article points out, at least he's real. Kudos to Pierce for a brilliantly written piece that contains perhaps the best line I've ever read about today's political realities: "It is a time of manufactured conflict between synthetic positions on counterfeit issues fought along artificial lines by ghostwritten people." I laughed when I read that line, but maybe I should have been crying.

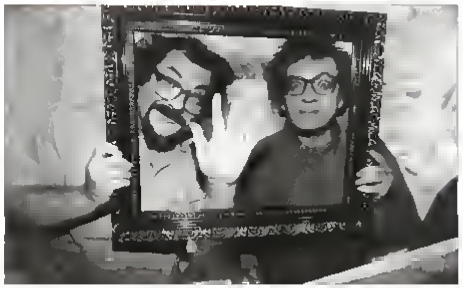
—Robert J. Herman
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MAX VADUKUL

contributors



Twenty years ago, Russian artists **Vitaly Komar** and **Alexander Melamid** fled the oppression of their homeland and landed in the no less oppressive environment of the New York art world. In both contexts, the duo thrived by subverting conventions and poking fun, with equal aplomb, at Stalin's socialist realism and Warhol's pop art. Today their work is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art. Their contribution to this month's issue, "America's Most Wanted Woman" (page 78), is an extension of their most recent project, America's Most Wanted Painting, in which they polled Americans about their taste in art and documented their findings in a book, *Painting by Numbers* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). So, can beauty really be determined by a pollster? "Of course," says Melamid. "We cherish democracy, and what is democracy if not consensus?"

Writer at large **Scott Raab** was cleaning out his Cleveland apartment in 1979 when he stumbled upon a fight poster from 1974's Rumble in the Jungle. It read, FROM SLAVE SHIP TO CHAMPIONSHIP and superimposed on a drawing of the African continent were pictures of Muhammad Ali and George Foreman. Rising from the bottom of the poster was a picture of Don King's head. "I don't think I realized until I saw that old poster quite how far he had come—from a blustery wannabe to the biggest force in his sport—in such a short burst of time," says Raab, whose profile of King, "The Last Boxing Story," can be found on page 94. "You had to wonder how the hell did this guy manage to get his head on there? I still think that's the big question about Don King."



Ben Watts has a special connection to the verdant Welsh landscape that he photographed for "Sort of English, but Better," one of this month's style features. He used to live there. Indeed, half his family is Welsh, and during the shoot Watts and his crew stayed at his family's hotel in Llangefni. "It was wonderful being back. The constant rain in Wales saturates the colors and makes the grass so green and the clothes so vibrant," says Watts, who has done magazine work for *Vibe* and *Raygun* and advertising work for Nike, among others. "I also ended up shooting a bunch of the locals. They're not used to people taking pictures. They were quite intrigued by it all."

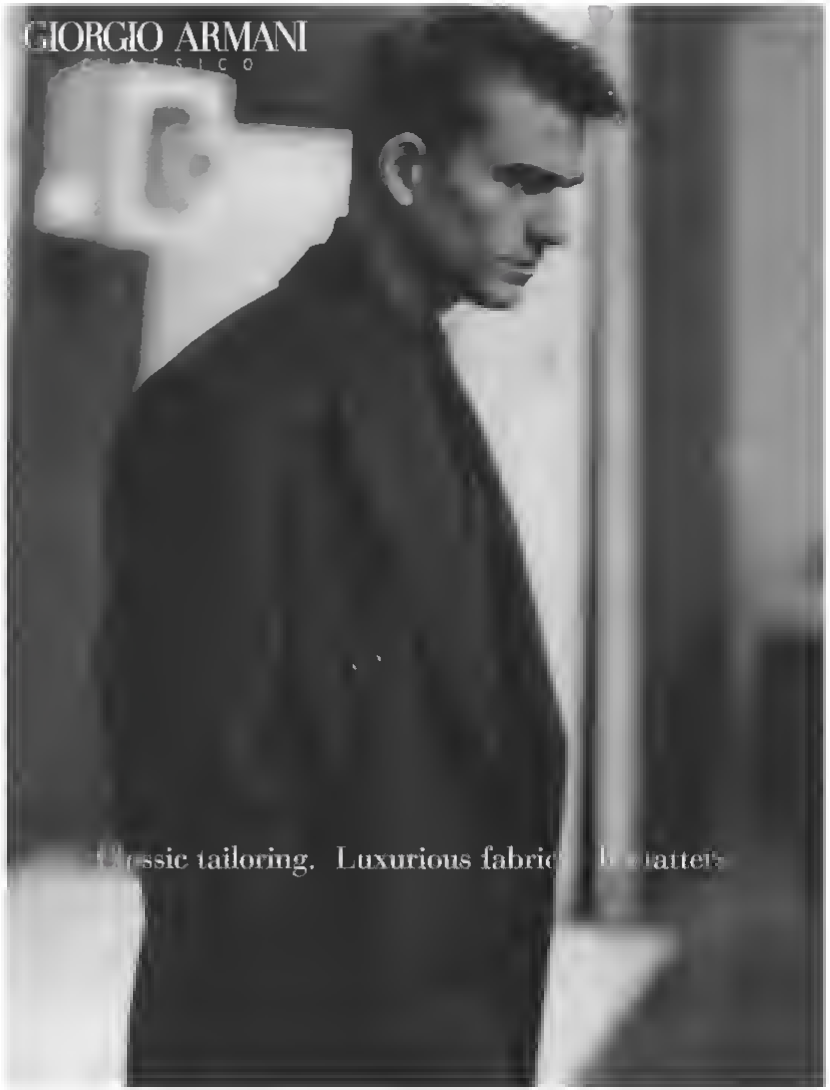


Bill Zehme was an undergrad at Loyola University when he first wrote about Hugh Hefner. "Back then, Hefner was the most mythical figure in the world to me, and I used the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Playboy* as an occasion to write a Hef celebration in the school paper," says Zehme, an Esquire writer at large. "Of course, when the piece came out, the Jesuit deans went crazy and I set off a big First Amendment battle on campus." Zehme's most recent book, *The Way You Wear Your Hat: Frank Sinatra and the Lost Art of Living* (HarperCollins), was a *New York Times* best seller. "After spending two months with Hef," says Zehme, "I'm thinking my next book should be *The Way You Wear Your Robe*." His portrait of Hefner begins on page 58.

Talk about making your presence felt. In addition to this month's cover story on the lovely Helen Hunt, "The Woman We Love Above All Other Women We Love (This Year)," on page 67, contributing editor **Ted Allen** is also responsible for the Q&A with actor Tom Sizemore (Man at His Best, page 23) and the breakdown of Ving Rhames's workout secrets (Male Animal, page 119). "To my recollection, Tom Sizemore was the first guy I've ever interviewed who wore only his underwear," says Allen, who came to Esquire after spending four and a half years as a senior editor at *Chicago* magazine. "It's my position that all celebrity profiles should be conducted in underwear. Sadly, Helen and Ving didn't see it that way."



BOTTOM: IAN SPANIER





Alex Tehrani shooting
Kodak Royal Gold 100 film.

For me, photography is an opportunity to offer people a glimpse into a world that I was fortunate enough to spend some time in. So I try to produce a picture that's telling and honest about that world.



60 @ f56 - 630 am

It's nice to know you can blow up an image and it'll stay sharp You can actually see the mesh in the screen door



Once I get an image that's compelling, I like to blow it up. It's a way to look into the soul of the photograph and really dig into it. That's why I used Kodak Royal Gold film for this shot. It has excellent grain structure that holds its fine detail when it's enlarged.

Philip Hall





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Say what you will about Helen Hunt—that you love her more than any man, or magazine for men, ever could; that you have loved her ever since she played

Murray's daughter on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (and how many men can say that?); that should her boyfriend Hank Azaria, somehow find himself in the middle of a giant explosion and by some unfortunate miracle survive but need a double eyeball transplant, you would gladly donate yours if only to be able to gaze into her eyes every morning, even though all your friends say that would be idiotic and the situation isn't ever going to come up anyway. Say all that about Helen Hunt, along with those inchoate moans you spasmodically emit at the mere thought of her, but you do have to admit: She is a little strange looking.

In some pictures, if you stare at them long and hard enough, it appears as if the left side of her face has been smushed together a tiny bit and shoved a smidge above baseline, giving her face a vaguely crooked look. And then there's her forehead, which goes on and on and on, well past her eyebrows, you could fit a whole other face up there (well, a baby's face, certainly, or a small adult face turned on its side). Her lips are also, truth be told, thinnish.

Some folks would argue that these are the most minor of imperfections, which in no way detract from Helen Hunt's beauty; we couldn't disagree more. We would argue, if not to the death then well into the night, that the asymmetries and nonmodalities of Ms. Hunt's face are not imperfections but pluperfections: grace notes that not only do not detract from her beauty, they define it.

Make no mistake. We are not saying that Helen Hunt's countenance has *character*, that she has a *down-to-earth quality* or a *beautiful smile*, or any of that other crap people say in the face of nonmodel looks. We are saying that it is precisely the flaws that make the looks Heather Graham's eyes the size of cantaloupes and Alex Kingston's wild outcropping—half mane, half beast. Where would Cindy Crawford be if not for that nevus that throws her whole face out of whack?



BRIAN VELENCHENKO

Men are often accused of setting an impossible standard of beauty for women, usually in the form of phrases like "prevalent ideology that objectifies women," uttered by people with titles like assistant professor at the Women's Studies Program at Emory University in Atlanta. Well, at the risk of sounding defensive, *uh-uh*. Because, although we can come to some consensus about what constitutes a dream girl (see page 78), in our darkest heart of desire, we are all utter—and eccentric—tyrants.

If you'd really like to know what men want, look not to glossy-magazine polls or mainstream movie stars, go to the one place where men are brutally frank, in their choice of pornography. There, amid the skinny, booby Playmates, you will also find racks upon racks of *Big Butt* and *Small-tops*, *Barely Legal* and *Over-50 Plumpers* and *Poppin' Mamas*. Different folks, it would seem, for different strokes. And, of course, the fastest-growing segment of the meat marketplace is amateurs, *as you very well know*. In magazines and videos and all over the Internet, from abbyanduma.com to zoja.com, these women are amateurs only in the sense that they don't look like you should be paying them to take their clothes off. But men do, amateur porn is a billion-dollar-a-year business. Men are putting their money where their minds are: on real women—size, shape, age, color, and features all delightfully optional.

Vive les différences!



Dangerous Knowledge, page 24
The Endorsement page 31
Drinking, page 36
Eating, page 38

man at his best

A Savior and Private Ryan

A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH A GUY WHO SWEARS HE'S BEEN SMOKING CIGARS FOR WAY LONGER THAN IT'S BEEN THE THING TO DO

Here's who he was: a street kid from Detroit who nonetheless went to college a year early, got an M.F.A. from Temple, and read Proust for pleasure.

Here's who he's been: the guy who played the detective-slash-psycho Jack Scagnetti in *Natural Born Killers*, the Chicago dick who carried *The Relic*, the sleazy double-crosser who set up Denzel Washington in *Devil in a Blue Dress*, the master thief who'll De Niro and Val Kilmer in *Heat*. This past spring, he was John Gotti in *Witness to the Mob*. And now he is the second lead in Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*, alongside Tom Hanks, whom you already know.

Here's who he's going to be: the guy to watch. A cigar-smoking, cream colored 1972 Chevelle-Super Sport convertible-with-a-bored-out 440-that'll-do-168-miles-an-hour driving actor who does interviews in his boxer shorts and pals around with Robert De Niro. Soon, you'll be calling him Tom Sizemore. —Ted Allen



JEFF DUNAS

ESQ: Your creepiest moment in Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* had to be when you put your hands around that hooker's neck and said, "You ever been strangled? Just kidding!" before you really killed her. Sizemore: That was an improv. Oliver liked those "Just kidding"s. Finally Oliver just went, "Kill her! Kill her! It's what you like!" I had a hard time playing that part, to tell you the truth. **John Gotti was easier? His motivations are clearer.** Money. And power. **You didn't look like yourself at all playing him, perhaps because you had to gain thirty-seven pounds.** He got really heavy right before he got convicted. One of the first things John would say if he hadn't seen you for a while: he'd go, "I just put on a couple pounds." Before you could say "Hey, John, looks like you put on a couple pounds," in the last couple of weeks of filming, I was drinking these weight-gainer things like a madman. **Your poor wife.** Big, fat ass—can't even see my own penis. I dream of the day I can see my penis. **So now you and Tom Hanks are invading Normandy.** We're rangers. Tom and I get there, and we're almost pushed back in the water. The first five

man at his best

thousand are killed It was scary We had thousands of extras the whole Irish army the guys who did *Braveheart* There s no music It s just the sounds of battle I don t know if Steven will want me saying all these things but it shows the complete brutality and fuckup of this invasion and how the common soldier was the hero We get Eisenhower s instructions which are to go find this kid [Ryan played by Matt Damon] So we just go blindly out there It was a great great part Steven says he gave me the whole piano I d only had half a piano—finally got a whole piano **It must have been more fun preparing for Gotti than it was for this role pasta and cannoli versus C rations and living in a tent** Beef liver stuff and shit I weighed 190 when I got to boot camp I came out at 178 I ate only the beans and tomato sauce **The liver aside, this acting thing is working for you It must be surreal to be only thirty-four and to be embraced by legends. De Niro, say** Bob and I became really good friends during the training for *Heat* He s misunderstood The standoffish quality is just that he wants to have a private life number one—I mean number two mainly he s shy I could not have gotten through my substance abuse without Bob and my wife Maeve I ve got three years clean, away from narcotics now—I m not going to get into the drug, it doesn t start with a c I don t even drink But I was careening, I was gonna die **I understand De Niro staged your "intervention."** He said "I know what you're doing." I lied He just looked at me and went "You don t have to lie to me." He called my family behind my back He was dealing with professional interventionists or whatever they re called I had an appointment at a therapist s, and I went and there was a knock at the door and in walked my mother who lives in Michigan And Bob right behind her He was the one sitting next to me holding me He said "It s going to be okay." And I started crying He said "It s over now I got a car outside." In the car, he was saying "I m not losing another person to this shit, this garbage" It was like out of a movie—he was my idol And he kept saying "Don't you want to wake up in the morning and know what the fuck you did the night before? Don't you know you're a wonderful actor? Don't you know your life s just beginning?"

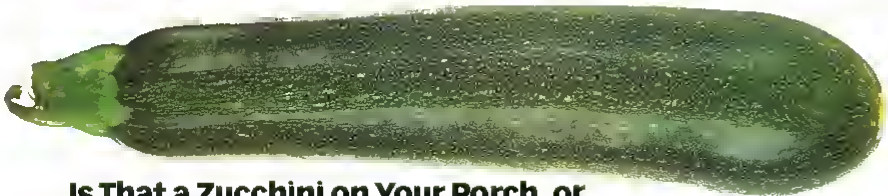
DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE

Two million Americans—bank tellers, retail salesmen and federal job candidates—take lie-detector tests each year Almost half of these people fail even if they are telling the truth That could happen to you if you let it But you don t have to let it The key to passing the polygraph is misdirection—throwing off the test s measurements of your breathing, perspiration, pulse and skin conductance so that those measurements vary widely throughout the test. That way the polygraph becomes useless Your inquisitors don t know when you re telling the truth and when you re stretching it According to Charles Clifton author of *Deception Detection* here s how to do that

- Feign anxiety when asked innocuous questions (Is today Monday?) and remain relatively calm during pointed interrogation (Did you steal three Armani suits?)
- Tense your muscles. One effective (and subtle) method Tighten your sphincter for ten seconds, then release
- Inflict pain on yourself (bite your tongue!) but maintain an unflappable visage
- Mind your breathing—deviations from your normal pattern will be noted
- Change your posture noticeably *once*—red flags are raised if you overdo it
- Spray a thin coating of antiperspirant on your fingertips to throw off the polygraph needle But go easy The examiner always feels your fingertips before attaching the electrode



Sizemore with Tom Hanks in *Saving Private Ryan.*



Is That a Zucchini on Your Porch, or . . .

It happens every year—same thing August rolls around, It s harvest time and you realize that once again you ve overshot on the planting, you ve got zucchini up the wazoo and, Lord almighty, what are you going to do with all that squash? Well you do what the ingenious folks in Mount Gretna Pennsylvania do—you dump it on your brethren August 8 is annual Sneak Some Zucchini onto Your Neighbor's Porch Night there a time for joy and giving and stealthfully creeping about after dark and sticking your zucchini all over the place As for all those tomatoes—well you figure it out —Lauren Iannotti





Cotton V-neck T-shirt by Paul Smith ($40). Cotton briefs by Boss Hugo Boss Bodywear ($9.50). Cashmere socks by Donna Karan ($45).



Cotton crewneck T-shirt by Brooks Brothers ($19.50). Cotton boxers by Polo Ralph Lauren ($17).

Remember when you were a kid and your mother got you all those new clothes at back-to-school time? Maybe some Lee cords, a pair of Jox or leather Pumas, and some striped Gant polo shirts? You got underwear, too—lots of it. She was stocking up. Buying what you needed ahead of time 'cause you wouldn't have a chance later, once the bell rang. Which, given how busy most of us are today, is still a good strategy. Now go ahead. Say it. Mom was right.



Cotton crewneck T-shirt by Helmut Lang ($50). Button-fly cotton boxer-briefs by Calvin Klein ($18). Wool socks by Ralph Lauren Purple Label ($31).



Cotton V-neck T-shirt by Giorgio Armani ($65). Cotton boxer briefs by Jockey ($13). Cotton athletic socks by Dockers (three for $12).

MICHAEL GRIMM

For store information, see page 143.

When I'm not
giving
mouth-to-mouth
or consoling
a fellow
lifeguard
with
sun-damaged
hair,
I worry about
real-life
things like
getting
osteoporosis
when I'm older.
You know,
men
and women
are both
at risk when
they don't
get enough
calcium.
That's why
I drink
lots of
milk now.
1%.
And
depending
on how
much I drink,
I wait
a half hour
before
saving a
life.

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Now there's a simple new pill for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (a common medical problem also called impotence).

VIAGRA™ (sildenafil citrate) is a prescription pill that may help you achieve erections the natural way—in response to sexual stimulation.

Naturally, the response has been positive.

With VIAGRA, you may be able to respond naturally once again—with the ease of a pill. Ask your doctor if VIAGRA is the right step for you.

VIAGRA should not be taken by men who use drugs known as nitrates (most often used to control angina) in any form, at any time. Nitrates can reduce blood pressure to unsafe levels if used with VIAGRA. Be sure to talk to your doctor about any medications you take.

In clinical trials, VIAGRA was well tolerated. Some men experienced side effects, including headache, facial flushing, and upset stomach. A small percentage of men experienced mild and temporary visual effects. (See product information for more details.) ***For more information, call 1-888-4VIAGRA or visit www.viagra.com.***

VIAGRA
(sildenafil citrate) tablets

Let the dance begin.

tion for VIAGRA (25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg) tablets

Let the dance begin.

Brief summary of prescrib ng information

VIAGRA
(sildenafil citrate) tablets

INDICATION AND USAGE
VIAGRA is indicated for the treatment of erfrect le dysfunction. The studies that established beneft demnostrated mprevemants in nmocss rates for sexua ntercourse compared with placebo

CONTRAINDICATIONS
Use of VIAGRA in nontraindicated in patients with a known hypersensitivity to any component of the tablet. Consistent with its known effects on the nitric oxide/cGMP pathway (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY), **VIAGRA was shown to potentiate the hypotensive effects of nitrates and its administration to patients who are concurrently using organic nitrates in any form is therefore contraindicated.**

PRECAUTIONS
General
A thorough med cal hstory and physi nal exam nat on should be undertaken to diagnose erectile dysfnct on determine potential underlying causes and identify appropriate treatment
Thera s e degree of cardiac r sk associated with sexnal activity therefore physicians may wish to consider the cardiovascular status of their patients prior to initiating any treatment for erectile dysfunction
Agents for the treatment of erectile dysfunction should be used with caution in patients with anatomical deformation of the penis (such as angulation cavernosal fibrosis or Peyronie's disease) or in patients who have conditions which may predispose them to priapism (such as sickle cell anemia, multiple myeloma or leukemia)
The safety and efficacy of combinations of VIAGRA with other treatments for erectile dysfunction have not been studied. Therefore the use of such combinations is not recommended
VIAGRA has no effect on bleeding time when tekan glann ck with aspirin. In vitro studies with human platelets indicate that sildenafil potentiates the antiaggregatory effect of sodium nitroprusside (a nitric oxide donor). Therefore no safety information on the administration of VIAGRA to patients with elevated ng disorders or active peptic ulceration. Therefore VIAGRA and nitric oxide donors should be administered with caution in these patients.
A minority of patients with the inherited condition retinitis pigmentosa have genetic disorders of retinal photosphosterases. There is no safety information on the administration of VIAGRA to patients with retinitis pigmentosa. Therefore, VIAGRA should be administered with caution in these patients.
Information for Patients
Phys cians should counsel patients that sexual activity may present a cardiac risk to vulnerable patients and discuss the appropriate management of cardiovascular risk factors with patients as appropriate.
Physicians should inform patients that VIAGRA does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases. Counseling of patients about the protective measures necessary to guard against sexually transmitted diseases including the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), may be considered.
Drug Interactions
Effects of Other Drugs on VIAGRA
In vitro studies. Sildenafil metabolism is principally mediated by the cytochrome P450 (CYP) isoforms 3A4 (major route) and 2C9 (minor route). Therefore, inhibitors of these isoenzymes may reduce sildenafil clearance.
In vivo studies. Cimetidine (800 mg), a non-specific CYP inhibitor, caused a 56% increase in plasma sildenafil concentration when co-administered with VIAGRA (50 mg) to healthy volunteers.
When a single (100 mg dose of VIAGRA was administered with erythromycin, a specific CYP3A4 inhibitor, at steady state (500 mg dose for 5 days), there was a 182% increase in sildenafil systemic exposure (AUC). Stronger CYP3A4 inhibitors such as ketoconazole, itraconazole or ritonavir would be expected to have similar effects (see pharmacokinetics section). Higher doses of VIAGRA (200 mg) should be considered when a potential interaction with these agents is anticipated.
In healthy volunteers, co-administration of VIAGRA (50 mg) with the CYP3A4 inhibitor saquinavir (1200 mg three times daily) for five days resulted in a 140% increase in sildenafil AUC. VIAGRA had no effect on saquinavir pharmacokinetics.
Although not studied, it is expected that other CYP3A4 inhibitors such as erythromycin, ketoconazole and itraconazole will reduce sildenafil clearance.
Single doses of antacid (magnesium hydroxide/aluminum hydroxide) did not affect the bioavailability of VIAGRA.
Sildenafil (100 mg) had no effect on the steady state pharmacokinetics of the HIV protease inhibitor saquinavir, a CYP3A4 substrate.
Other nitric oxide donors or nitrates: There is no safety information on the administration of VIAGRA to patients who are using nitric oxide donors or nitrates in any form, and therefore the use of such combinations is contraindicated.
The use of VIAGRA without protection against sexually transmitted diseases: Counseling of patients about the protective measures necessary to guard against sexually transmitted diseases including the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), may be considered.
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Gene Splicing

Talk to him about the new 911 and Harm Lagaay speaks of "bloodlines." Lagaay, the chief Porsche designer is the man who put the thin creases in the slimmer body of the redesigned 1998 Porsche 911, the first completely new version of this quintessential German sports car since it was introduced in 1964. The old 911's genes may be the purest in the Porsche pool, but they have been crossed with those of the sleeker, lighter Boxster whose liquid-cooled engine it shares. The more thoughtful face and slimmer hips correctly imply handling that is less unruly than its predecessor's. And although not as beefy in appearance, the new 911 *is* more muscular—two tenths of a second quicker to sixty—than the prior 911 and more eager to slice into and cut up a curve. Which brings us to what Lagaay really means when he speaks of bloodlines. He doesn't mean pedigree, the lines that inspired this Porsche, he says, are the sharp grooves cut into butcher blocks to drain off the blood. —Phil Patton

For information on car, call 800 545 8039

ESQUIRE'S AUTHORS

What do you get when Chuck Yeager and the secret planes of the cold war, nuclear testing, and alien landings all converge on an area of the Nevada desert about the size of Belgium that doesn't really exist and no one can visit? You get *Dreamland* (Villard, $25). Esquire writer Phil Patton's new nonfiction book, which explores all the theories that constitute the culture of the non-place known as Area 51. Without pointing a finger or screaming conspiracy, Patton opines that the flying saucer sightings have been U-2's or robot planes—secret craft that the government wanted to keep secret and thus allowed UFO buffs to blame on alien life forms.

He Got Game

ELWOOD REID SCORES WITH HIS FIRST NOVEL

Think college football: offensive tackle: big as-a-phone-booth jock. Image come to mind? Think classes: Rocks for Jocks, Intro to Sports Management, Theories of Refereeing. Now imagine being smart and being stuck in that world. This is the conflict in Elwood Reid's book *If I Don't Six* (Doubleday, $23), a thunderous rush through freshman-year Big Ten–recruit football, where young men are brutalized into fighting machines and braininess is a liability. Because for Elwood Riley (like Reid himself, an offensive lineman), life balances precariously on the uncertain fulcrum of Michigan football. If he doesn't *six*—that is, lose his scholarship ("eighty six") or get killed ("deep six")—he may just manage to steal an education and avoid the Cleveland factories that trap his dad and await him.

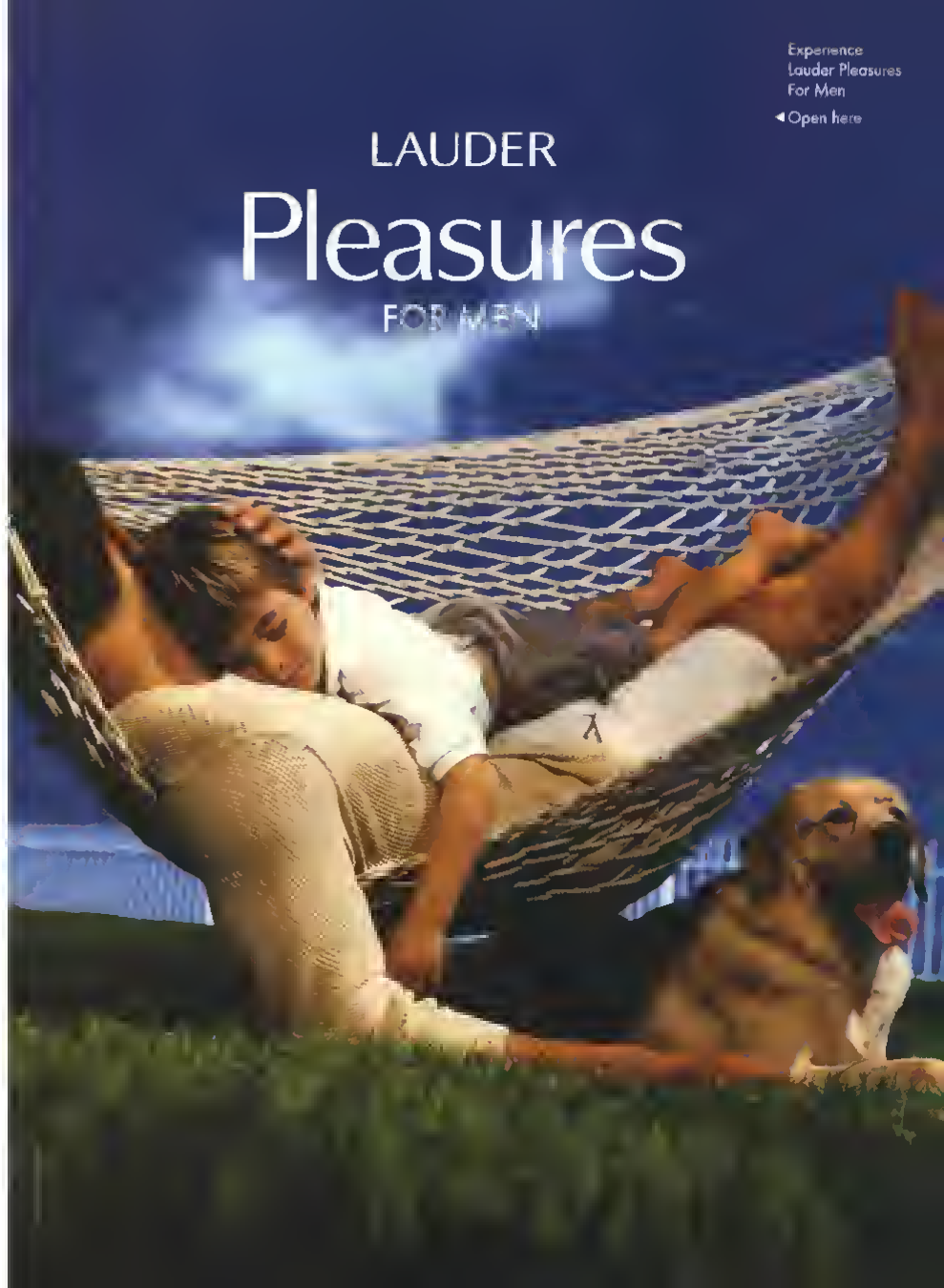


With clean, sharp prose, Reid presents the difficulty of being intellectually curious and athletically talented in a volatile culture in which big-time coaches create pro-level players by pulverizing young recruits. Here, the only rules are football. Off the field, Riley's teammates roam free in an unstable realm of booze, steroids, and violence. At any moment, this world could blow. Pain is constant—cortisone shots from needles the size of nails; movable bruises, welts, shattered bones, and torn muscles—and damage is something permanent. Something Riley knows will last, the race is to educate himself before his body gives out and his scholarship is yanked. *If I Don't Six* is an addictive read, unadorned and adrenalined—proof enough that Elwood Reid definitely didn't six here. —Amanda Davis

BOTTOM: IAN SPANIER

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Manuel, left, and Tomás Delgado

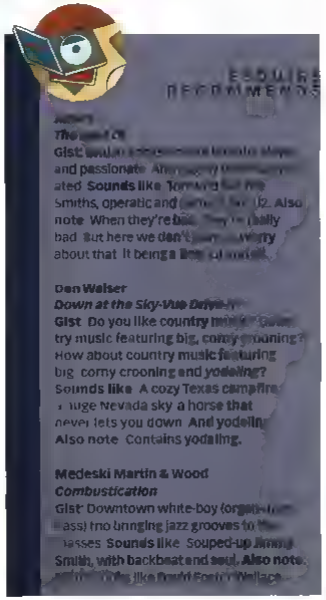
For information on guitars, call 213-261-2611

Six-String Art

There's no getting around it. Guitars are built to be played. But even if you can't pluck a chicken, you shouldn't let narrow-mindedness keep you from buying a Candelas. They're *objets* as much as instruments: gorgeous, entirely hand-hewn, mellifluous, and with the cachet of being little known except to the initiated. Andrés Segovia knew enough to own one. Jose Feliciano, too. Likewise the guys in Los Lobos. And Charo has four. But outside Latino circles, Candelas remain largely unheard of, with guys like Paul Young and Ry Cooder among the exceptions. After all, the tiny shop that makes them is in East L.A.—a very Chicano quadrant of a very segregated city.

Porfirio Delgado and his brother, Candelario, founded Candelas Guitars in 1925. Now Porfirio's grandsons, Tomás and Manuel, lead the four-man shop. Cooking up family guitar recipes at a pair of old tables behind the cash register, they spend two, three, even six months perfecting each instrument, which can cost as much as $8,000. Some come as big as Mama Cass, others as small as Pia Zadora—but with class. There are guitars with enough abalone inlays to make a matador's getup look dull. Others are seductively understated: just a glassy hourglass of plain white German spruce up front, with colorful hand-carved wood mosaics—no decals—that ring the sound hole and stretch up the rich, rare Brazilian-rosewood back.

Hardly anyone but you may notice the finer details, but that's what collector's items are all about. —**Matthew Segal**



ESQUIRE RECOMMENDS

Gist: Brazilian [illegible] and passionate. Alternately [illegible] ated. **Sounds like:** Tom Jobim, the Smiths, operatic and [illegible]. Also note: When they're bad, they're really bad. But here we don't [illegible] about that. It being a [illegible]

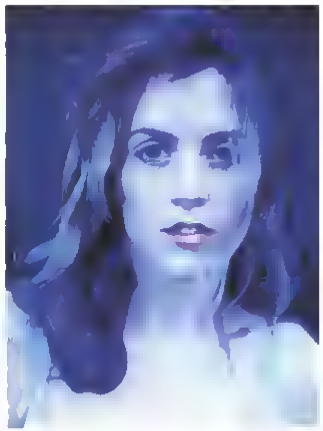
Dan Walser
Down at the Sky-Vue Drive-In
Gist: Do you like country music? Guitar try music featuring big, corny crooning? How about country music featuring big, corny crooning and yodeling? **Sounds like:** A cozy Texas campfire under a huge Nevada sky, a horse that never lets you down. And yodeling. **Also note:** Contains yodeling.

Medeski Martin & Wood
Combustication
Gist: Downtown white-boy (organ-trio, bass) trio bringing jazz grooves to the masses. **Sounds like:** Souped-up Jimmy Smith, with backbeat and soul. **Also note:** [illegible] like David Foster Wallace.

Less Foul Phair

A ROCK 'N' ROLL BAD GIRL WASHES HER MOUTH OUT

Her most famous songs are the ones you won't hear on the radio. That's because Liz Phair [illegible] see, Liz Phair is a girl with a *reputation*. Since her 1993 debut, *Exile in Guyville*, she's been known less for her crafty love-gone-good/love-gone-bad songwriting and more for her blunt lyrics. With the release of her third album, *whitechocolatespaceegg*, the thirty-one-year-old Phair just might be cleaning up her act. Or is she? —**Andrew Chaikivsky**



Esquire: Your new album—the songs just aren't that raunchy anymore. What gives? Phair: Oh, but you're wrong. There's "Ride," there's "Baby Got Going"—well, it's not about blow jobs. It's about [illegible] you're not quite sure what. I'm not as direct about it now because I've had a lot more sex since then. **I see. This is one of the most anticipated records of the year . . . and last year . . . and the year before that. What happened?** I wanted to reincarnate myself musically and lyrically. And I'm a very haphazard person. So there were a lot of fits and starts, and for a while there I was much more, um, domestically inclined. **Right. You got married, had a baby—ever sing him to sleep?** This is embarrassing to admit, because all mommies out there will be like "What? You didn't sleep-train him at four months?" but till almost eight months, I'd sing to him *every* freakin' night and for *every* nap. **Any of your own songs?** Oh, no, just mommy songs, songs I'd make up for him like [*sings*] "Nicky's flying in a *spa-a-ace* taco, a *spa a-ace* taco." **Any chance you'll record them?** Someone said I should do a children's album, but . . . I could never do that.

Playful.
Provocative.
Plimpton.
Punch

TOP: NATHANIEL WELCH; RIGHT: MARK MATCHO

Red Gold

MANY CALIFORNIA WINES ARE AS VALUED AS THE FRENCH BLUE CHIPS, BUT WORTH DRINKING NOW



"This guy calls from Japan, wanting to buy three hundred cases," says Roger Asleson of Napa Valley's Opus One—a wine that costs $90 a pop. "We had to tell him we couldn't even find three bottles to sell." Meanwhile at nearby Silver Oak Cellars, buyers are rationed one $50 bottle apiece—no small concession, since the supply evaporates almost before it hits the retail shelves.

Smell the glove. Luscious and boldly flavored, California's luxury Bordeaux-style blends have become the favored designer drug of the investment boom.

And though some are bought as investments themselves (a case of the 1994 Dominus $75 a bottle last year, recently sold at Sotheby's for nearly twice that), most are being consumed. That is partly because only a few California labels fare reliably at auction alongside French blue chips and partly because they are so soft from birth. These wines may taste better in five years, but there's no need for them to languish in a cool, dark place.

If the craving takes you, your best chance at some of the most sought-after California reds is to get on a winery's mailing list or brace yourself to pay restaurant prices at your local wineshop. Either way, you've gotta buy now. Start with these ten.

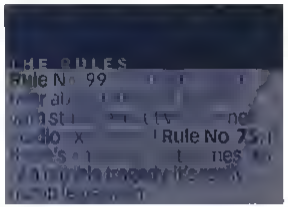
—Richard Nalley

1 RIDGE 1993 MONTE BELLO, Santa Cruz Mountains ($80). Stingy soils and crop thinning in Ridge's forty-year-old estate vineyard yielded a meager two tons to the acre of power-packed fruit, and Ridge put only the top 60 percent of that into the Monte Bello. California ripeness and flavor concentration meet subtle French-style silkiness and harmony. (408-867-3233)

2 DOMINUS 1995, Napa Valley ($90). From the famous old Napanook Vineyard, now owned by Christian Moueix, the man behind Bordeaux's hyperluxe Château Petrus. The supercharged 14 percent-plus-alcohol 1995 edition is velvety dark, broodingly rich. (707-944-8954)

3 BERINGER 1993 PRIVATE RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, Napa Valley ($65). A mouth-filling, confectionary wine, with wafting, perfumed aromas of vanilla from new French oak barrels, crushed plum and black currant from Cabernet grapes, and a lick of something like cocoa to top it off. (707-963-7115)

4 OPUS ONE 1994, Napa Valley ($90). The Robert Mondavi–Mouton-Rothschild joint venture raised eyebrows in Bordeaux when announced in 1978, then in Napa when its vineyards were planted with up to a superdense 2,700 vines per acre (versus the then-standard 450). These vineyards so fussed over they look like ornamental hedges, yield intense, small berries that help produce an elegant, smooth touch of a wine that all but glides down your throat. (707-944-9442)



5 SHAFER 1993 HILLSIDE SELECT, Napa Valley ($60). With the grapes from its estate vineyard, Shafer pushes the envelope—on ripeness, alcohol, and oak. The result is a saturatedly rich California-style powerhouse so mouthwateringly supple you don't realize your tongue's gone black. (707-944-2877)

6 PAHLMEYER 1995 RED WINE, Napa Valley ($50). Any wine associated with winemaker consultant Helen Turley vanishes overnight on release, and this is trademark Turley: full-force, filled-in flavor from the tip of the tongue to the vivid aftertaste. (707-255-2321)

7 JOSEPH PHELPS 1994 INSIGNIA, Napa Valley ($70). The first high-end California wine to go by a name (rather than by a grape), Insignia is nevertheless a Cabernet lover's Cabernet, with its pillowy soft, sweet black-plum-and-cassis fruitiness. (707-963-2745)

8 PLUMPJACK 1995 RESERVE CABERNET-SAUVIGNON, Napa Valley ($65). A kind of brat pack operation presided over by barely thirty-somethings Gavin Newsom and Bill (son of Gordon) Getty. This is a muscular, tightly coiled, color-saturated wine with a smoky background from charred barrels. Strong stuff, seamlessly well-knit. (707-945-1220)

9 SILVER OAK 1993, Napa Valley ($50). Contrarian cult winery Silver Oak ages its wine for nearly five years, including an unheard-of thirty months in all-new American—not "standard" French—barrels. What emerges is a very stylized Cabernet: plump, glove-soft, and shot through with a minty, clovey, mildly toasted, oaky character. (707-944-8808)

10 QUINTESSA 1994, Napa Valley ($70). The first release of an ambitious single-vineyard wine with Bordeaux star Jacques Boissenot flying in to wave a wand over the vats. Super-polished and graceful, with a sneaky flavor punch. (707-963-7111)

JANICE FABER

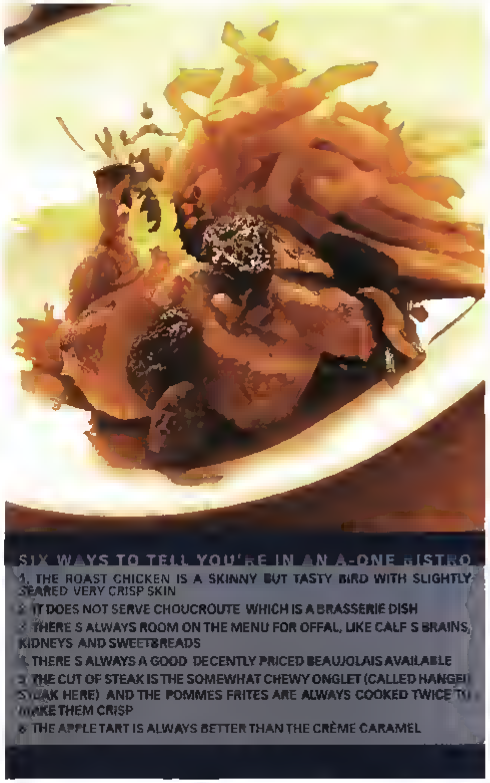


Give Me a Bistro

ESQUIRE'S FOOD CORRESPONDENT SOUNDS THE CLARION FOR HIS FAVORITE KIND OF RESTAURANT

I have only one rule of thumb about arriving in Paris after a fitful night flight, and that is to rush headlong to a favorite bistro, eat a good meal, and drink half a carafe of red wine. Sleep, business, museums, shopping...can all wait, but a bistro gives me immediate access to the spirit, soul, and belly of the city.

On my last trip, I headed straight for L'Absinthe, a new bistro on the Place du Marché St. Honoré. With my first sip of a bracing Côtes du Rhône and a bite of baguette lavished with butter, I felt at home again in a city where I've never lived. A wave of good feeling ran through me, and the jet lag dropped away with the first morsel of delicate ravioli stuffed with langoustines. Then came a steaming pork knuckle with hot mustard sauce, a plump wedge of Camembert, and a cold, sweet orange custard. With coffee, a nip of calvados, and tax and tip included, the bill came to forty bucks. It was the kind of restorative experience that goes far beyond food and wine, and one you can truly have only in a French bistro, which for me is the perfect form of restaurant.



SIX WAYS TO TELL YOU'RE IN AN A-ONE BISTRO

1. THE ROAST CHICKEN IS A SKINNY BUT TASTY BIRD WITH SLIGHTLY SEARED, VERY CRISP SKIN.
2. IT DOES NOT SERVE CHOUCROUTE, WHICH IS A BRASSERIE DISH.
3. THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM ON THE MENU FOR OFFAL, LIKE CALF'S BRAINS, KIDNEYS, AND SWEETBREADS.
4. THERE'S ALWAYS A GOOD, DECENTLY PRICED BEAUJOLAIS AVAILABLE.
5. THE CUT OF STEAK IS THE SOMEWHAT CHEWY ONGLET (CALLED HANGER STEAK HERE), AND THE POMMES FRITES ARE ALWAYS COOKED TWICE TO MAKE THEM CRISP.
6. THE APPLE TART IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN THE CRÈME CARAMEL.

I love bistros because they are small (a brasserie is a gargantuan Alsatian subgenre) and have an intimacy created by the cunning closeness of their tables. They are family-owned neighborhood eateries, with the husband in the kitchen and the impeccably dressed wife up front and a warmth not found in formal dining rooms.

The walls, dulled by cigarette smoke, are usually a warm yellow; the mirrors tilted to give the room depth and reflected light and to give you an opportunity to flirt with someone at the table behind yours. The banquettes are deep reddish brown; there is usually some frosted glass, and the curtains are of fine lace. The food is always simple and full of flavor, with certain classics dependably on offer. The typography and purple ink on the menus seem always the same.

The universal appeal of the French bistro has caused a boom that's fanned out from Paris, where the old standbys like Chez Georges (which has the best beef and leg of lamb) and L'Ami Louis (whose foie gras and roast chicken are paragons of their form) still thrive and where new ones, owned by star chefs—like L'Absinthe, Les Bookinistes, and Rôtisserie d'en Face—are booked weeks in advance. At such places, people know they'll get nearly as good a meal for $30 to $40 as they would for $200 at the owner's more pretentious deluxe restaurant.

In the U.S., bistros are cropping up like fleurs-de-lis. In New York you can dine as well at Trois Jean, La Goulue, and Chez Jacqueline as you can in Paris. Just in the past year, these have been joined by a dozen or more worthy newcomers, including Alouette, Payard, Le Solex, Restaurant Roughalem, Café Milou, L'Orange Bleue, Totof, Denizen, and Titou. Elsewhere, there are fine entries like Mimosa and Bistrot Provençal in L.A., La Fontaine in Coconut Grove, Florida; Pastis and Absinthe in San Francisco; De Ville Bistro in New Orleans; Truc in Boston; Rouge 95 in Philadelphia; Bistro 110 in Chicago; and Gilles in Highland Park, Illinois.

You bring to a bistro whatever mood you're in, and then you shake it free or stir it up. When you feel gregarious, a bistro buoys you. When you feel blue, the gaiety of the place and the first aperitif bring you back from the brink. And because bistros all share so very much in common, they make you feel hungry and happy and at home, wherever you are in the world. —**John Mariani**

WYATT COUNTS



At least the fashion police won't give you a ticket. They may stop to admire the sophisticated lines of your 1998 Accord EX V-6 Coupe. Or take a moment to peruse the elegant interior, trimmed in leather. Or perhaps swoon at the performance of your 200-horsepower V-6 engine. But no tickets. Unless you're wearing fringe. Or rhinestones or something.



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HONDA

the screen

TV Epilepsy

By David Thomson



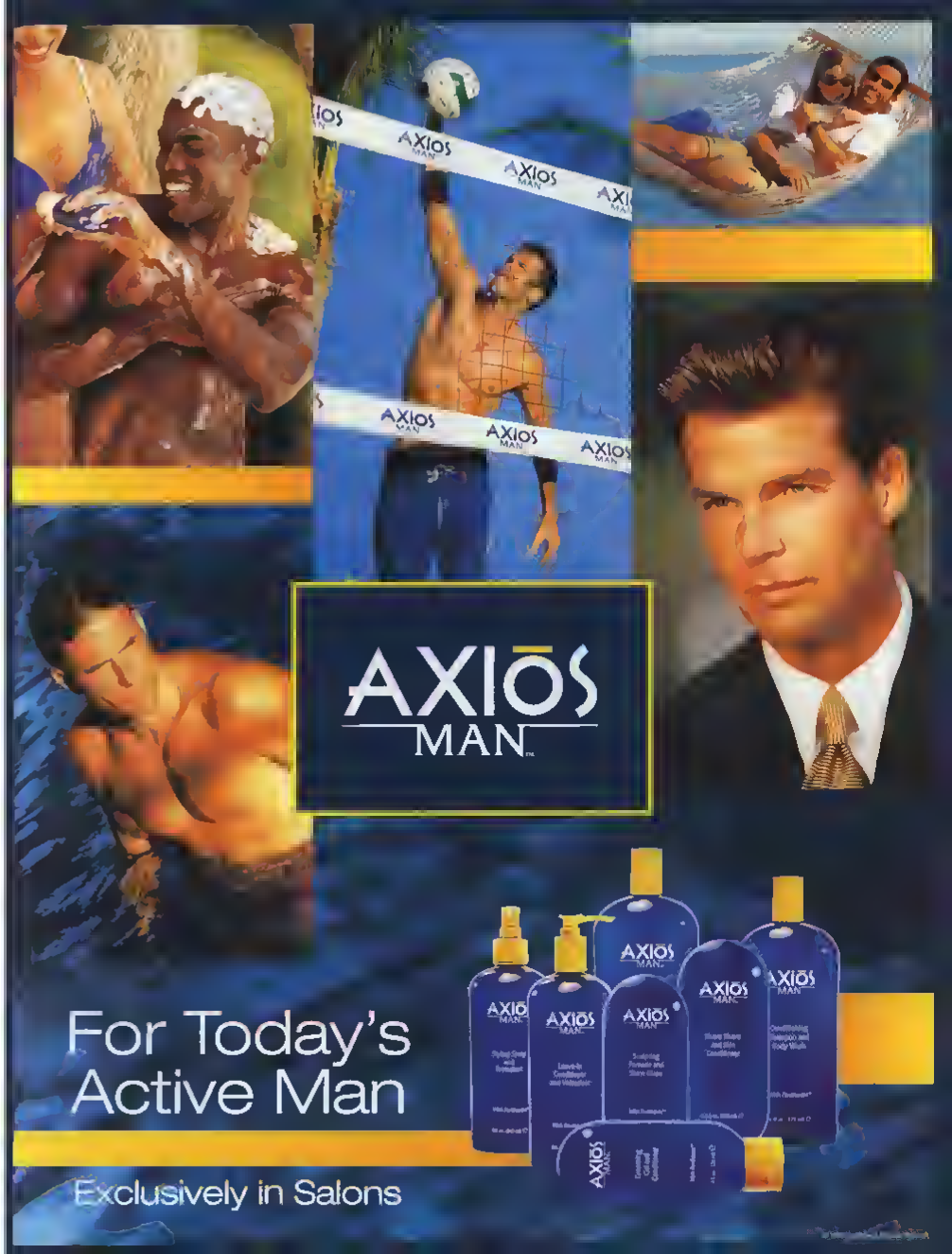
Kenan & Kel.
Rugrats.
Doug.
Pokemon.
Children's TV is more compelling than ever, but is it making kids sick?

PROTECT THE *children!* It's one of those pious and unassailable clichés that may mask all kinds of humbug and hypocrisy. Getting rid of the Jews, once, was meant to protect German children. I don't know whether children have a right to clean air or pure water any more than they have a constitutional claim on winning the lottery or getting wise parents. They have to make do as best they can, and it's amazing and encouraging how many kids manage to rise above bad luck, disastrous parents, or a hostile environment.

But how about television? Do kids have a right to that? Surely not. Do they have a right to live without it? Worth considering. Do we all need to take responsibility for it? Now we're talking.

Take *Pokemon*, a Japanese TV cartoon series set to debut across this country in the fall. *Pokemon* follows the antics of a bearlike creature named Pikachu and is derived from a Nintendo video

ROBERTO PARADA



game Both are enormously popular in Japan generating annual sales of about $4 billion But late last year, one episode of the show had unexpected results After viewing a scene of explosions and flashing lights almost seven hundred children scattered throughout Japan were affected by nausea, blackouts and seizures

As far as anyone can tell, no lasting damage was done—to the kids or to the show The giddy children soon felt fine again They watched *Pokemon* the next time it was on. The show's producers explained that the flashing scene had coincided with the regular pulsing rate of the TV imagery

Neurophysiologists have long known the phenomenon by which strobing—which can be as simple as driving over the San Francisco Bay Bridge at sunset as its struts break up the sunlight—can induce reactive behavior and even fits in something like one in ten thousand people

Pokemon goes into U S syndication this fall and will eventually reach about 85 percent of American homes The episode that caused all the trouble in Japan has not been included in the syndication package While it seems unlikely that *Pokemon* will induce a spate of domestic seizures, there's no predicting what degree of hysteria the show might prompt in a country in which boredom and affluence leave us prey to so much trivia and preschoolers not too long ago were persuaded that they'd been ravished by demons When it comes to TV, it's important to talk about degrees of danger, pleasure, and effect

There's no doubt about the way some children become obsessed with their screens There's a great Ray Bradbury story, "The Veldt," in which the kids' playroom has screens for walls so that they can summon up footage of any wonder or locale in the world These particular children have a fixation on the African veldt and its prowling lions The parents have noticed that, day by day, the lions seem to be coming closer to the room So they lock the playroom and try to adjust the machinery so that the veldt is no longer accessible. The kids eventually return to discover the mangled bodies of their parents in the playroom, looking as if they had been clawed by lions

It's only in parenthood that most of us come to appreciate the intensity with which some children can believe in their screens At five or six, my own son could not watch *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* (now as antique as the Gish sisters, yet never as touching) without leaping on and off the furniture, fashioning weapons out of household objects, and uttering the hissing cries and challenges of battling Rangers To interrupt this, we discovered, was not only pointless but perhaps even reckless and wrong. Our kid needed a physical release This had nothing to do with flashing lights and neurological impulses—it was a young boy working through identification and fantasy The effects were as immediate and demonstrable as a sugar high, and it would have been far more disturbing to force these impulses to remain mere trembling energies inside this otherwise very timid child

That energy, that involvement, in our own kids is a very moving thing to behold, so we have to ponder the thousands of hours they spend with the TV Won't you read instead? we ask Come to the museum? Take a walk? We may even have a CD ROM in the house that offers all the paintings of Matisse every waterfall in South America, or the magnificent experience of an African safari Yet all the kids want to do is watch Nickelodeon

They could do far worse Nickelodeon is not the only purveyor of children's TV, of course, though in May its energy and initiatives over the past few years were rewarded with the news that it, a cable channel, had just taken over first place in the key arena of Saturday mornings (that hallowed piece of the week when parents stay in bed late and their children run their desert-island kingdom in front of the set)

Nickelodeon aims at total programming for kids and it has developed an intriguing range of shows *Doug* and *Rugrats* appeal to the three-year-old yet easily hold the eight- or nine-year-old's attention The drawing is warm, wistful, and tender in *Doug* (a gentle, well meaning kid hero with a subtle Charlie Brown–esque inner sadness that, to the show's credit, is never explained) and exuberant, eccentric, and nearly fauvist in *Rugrats* (a droll portrait of the misunderstandings in family life) *Hey Arnold!* has the most stylized drawing of all the Nickelodeon shows and comes closest to surrealism

There are live-action programs, too, the most interesting of which are *The Secret World of Alex Mack* *The Journey of Allen Strange* and *Kenan & Kel*, the latter a fine example of Nickelodeon's admirable development of shows featuring black characters who appeal to children of all races Its shows have achieved a degree of racial crossover among viewers that adult programs can only envy

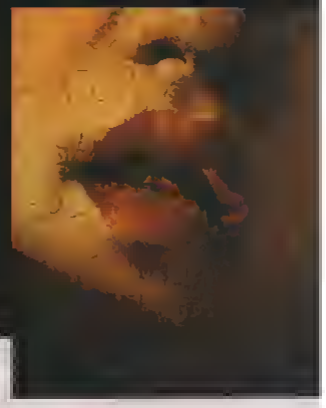
Nickelodeon has worked hard and honorably to give parents the feeling that their children are safe with the channel Language, violence, and sex are all carefully controlled, though the show *Clarissa Explains It All* prompts many questions Clarissa herself (Melissa Joan Hart) is somewhere between Nancy Drew and Lolita, no matter that her problems seem confined to academic pressure and slow-witted parents

Problem solving is not just habitual, it's automatic in all the Nickelodeon series Even the admiring viewer has to note the way in which this complacent orthodoxy locks into the commercials that urge kids to stay tuned for the next show while build-

PASSIVE, automatic television viewing, I think, poses more of a hazard to children than violence, unhappy endings, or the remote risk of seizures.

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the screen

ing up their "I want" quotient for the toys, goodies, games, and spin-offs.

There's a lot to be said for programs that help kids work out their problems—and there's the beginning of sterility in the blithe attitude that says all problems can be settled before the end of the show, in time for that reinforcing gift. I hope it's not too late still to suggest that if your kids are precious and huge in potential, then there is some point in sparing them commercials.

Nickelodeon has good shows and a positive attitude toward kids, but it is still TV—an enclosing force that seeks to tell children that everything is okay. Why not buy our products and feel even better? The channel doesn't want them to turn off the set and do anything else, and it's so benign and appealing that parents are tempted to say, 'Well, all right, just another half hour."

The most remarkable new program for kids on American screens is *Teletubbies* on PBS. This is aimed at children who can hardly talk yet. It begs to be watched close to the set, with the toddler in your lap so that he or she can best respond to the weird alien creatures—Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa, and Po—who run the show. *Teletubbies* is acutely based on repetition. Show some simple piece of action—washing up, say—and then respond to the infant cries of "Again!" by repeating it.

Periodically, *Teletubbies* cuts away to a shot of a baby's responsive face—and there's something deeply touching in letting the infants see a version of themselves onscreen. It may be the closest we can come now to sharing the passion and awe people felt around 1900 with the very first bits of film.

As effective children's programming, *Teletubbies* (and, for that matter, *The Simpsons*) depends on the parent's willingness to watch with the child. That principle applies to older children, too. You can have kids watch a great deal of television that is not "meant" for them—the news, movies, *Biography*, a good number of series like *Law & Order* (but emphatically not *South Park*)—if you're there with them, ready to talk about what's going on, able to exercise the critical faculty that lets us talk back to the set, change the channel sometimes, or turn it off and walk away.

It's passive, automatic viewing that seems to me the most dangerous—far more so than even violence, unhappy endings, or the remote risk of seizures. Some eight-year-olds come of their own accord to resent and despise ads—and that's the start of politics. Some see that the remote-control button gives them a rare power over the set so they can "play" it like a Nintendo game.

In the early decades of this century, in the young Soviet Union especially, there were fascinating experiments by people like Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov (geniuses of another age) on imagery, editing, and human response. They saw how a face and an object came together, sometimes very quickly, producing a new emotion or idea. Those pioneers sensed the inner dynamic of the new medium and wanted to understand it better. They were also intrigued by "irrational" responses to lights shown so briefly, they were more felt than seen.

That curiosity about the screen has been forsaken in our single-minded, if not monotonous, stress on storytelling and entertainment. But you can glimpse the same spirit of experimentation if you watch a child—your child—surfing with the remote control and beginning to discover the chaos of the world, as well as the comedy, the drama, the surrealism, and the miles of information in all those accidental collisions.

That sort of television may be our best model of the editing machine required to manipulate and process our vast repository of visual material. And whereas the present generation of parents was raised to relate to the screen as spectators, some eight-year-olds now can already see a chance at control. They feel like directors or editors, like decision makers. There's the real light. It is possible to arm children, to make them critical watchers. And in a world filled with the dangers we have made, nothing else will do. ■



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the lives of men

The House, the Wife, and the Bug Guy

By Robert Huber

Do you give your home the moral attention it deserves?



CATHERINE LEDNER

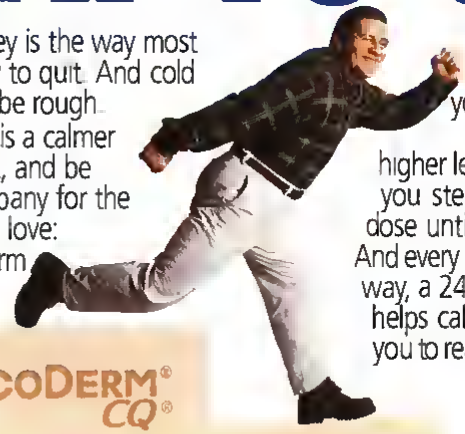
I DISCOVERED something important the other day in my mother's kitchen closet. I was getting a broom to sweep a sidewalk of gum-tree burrs—Dad's job, but he's dead now. A couple of months earlier, Mom had asked me to drill a hole in the handle so she could hang the broom by a leather loop. The drill bit had chipped off the cheap wood where it had poked through the dowel. Mom, I now saw, had taken a bit of deep-blue paint and touched up the end of the broom handle to match the rest.

I stared at it for a moment. A fucking broom! Mom's a young seventy-three, smart, and not crazy. I looked around the closet. Cans of food were lined up according to size on shelves that Dad had built long ago. In fact, he built the house. He took the blueprint of the place where Mom grew up across the street and made an exact replica, down to this closet. Where each food group has its own spot. Where there is not a speck of dust anywhere. Where there's a perfect all blue broom. It must have rankled Mom for a couple of days, that exposed bit of wood at the end of the handle

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What sloppy work I'd done I bet she woke up one morning and decided she'd had enough. Although she didn't quite get the blues to match, her touch-up a little watery, lacking the perfect, smooth, lacquered depth of the rest I wondered Did she take the broom along to the paint store in the attempt?

AT HOME, ON A Saturday morning I'm in the living room reading the paper, at about 8:00, on cup of coffee number two before I've made it out of the sports section Karen's up, too She's doing laundry Our sons, Sam and Nick, are still asleep

"Bah-ob." From the basement Not good Feet pound the old wooden steps, coming up "Bob!"

"Yes?"

"There are animals in the basement"

"What?"

"There are animals in the basement"

I heard her the first time, and I'm imagining wolves Over in the dark corner next to the furnace, their cold and perfect yellow eyes cutting through the gloom Then, as Karen's sight adjusts, there they are—the horrible, slathering mouths of a whole pack

Not that I get up For a moment, I hear nothing Then, the flexing wicker of the clothes basket She's coming this way

"You mean mice?" I say loudly the moment before she appears

From the doorway she stares down at me "No, I don't mean mice"

"What did you see?

She turns away I get off the couch But instead of racing downstairs, I follow her up to our bedroom

"So what did you see down there?"

Her arms straight like a toy soldier's, she plunks a towel on the bed "I saw shit"

"Oh" I stare at her for a moment "Where?"

"In the corner By the shelves—it's now there were faint brown marks

"It's ruining the porch," she said

Such a harsh word *ruining* Now the front of our house is much neater Now we have six tiny holly trees guarding the porch Actually, I didn't have to haul them home, dig the holes, plop them in the ground The landscaper who lives three doors down did it. She likes us My wife calls her a lot All it costs is money

So I spend most of Saturday morning letting Karen hang, because I've got her number She can deal with shit in the basement as easily as I can, of course But this is one of those times when she plays her card of "You don't do enough around the house Therefore, this is your problem" Fat chance Sam and Nick, ages nine and five, get up, wander downstairs I make them breakfast

Nick says, "What's Mommy mad about?"

"Nothing," I say, thinking that's exactly right "Nothing at all"

"Well, she seems mad."

Eventually, Karen comes down and looks at me The look is, *Well?*

I give her nothing

Sam wants to call his friend Mike to invite him over "It's too early," Karen and I say with the same you-should-know-that tone.

She pours herself some coffee and takes a chunk of the paper upstairs

I go back to the couch, but suddenly I'm curious, so I find a flashlight and go down Our basement is one small room, with an uneven brick floor and a low ceiling of cobwebbed pipes It's lit with one bare overhead bulb that I have to be careful not to smash with my forehead A big pile of dirty clothes, an ironing board we never use boxes stacked precariously a Christmas-tree stand

Right there, in the corner two suspicious looking brown lumps that look like rabbit feet Good size! I bend close enough to see a slightly grainy consistency I check the wall behind dusty wooden shelves and chuckle What Karen thought was some big, burly critter's fecal insensitivity is actually paint—long ago somebody dripped brown paint down the wall

But the brown lumps on the floor

I go upstairs, find a number, make a call The animal-control guy can come out this afternoon

I trudge upstairs Karen's in bed, reading the paper I stand above her and say "The shit on the wall, that's just paint The other stuff—something's down there, I don't know

CLEANING GUTTERS, weeding, painting. My wife's right—that's stuff I don't worry about. What's so wrong with grass that's a foot high?

dripping down the shelves'

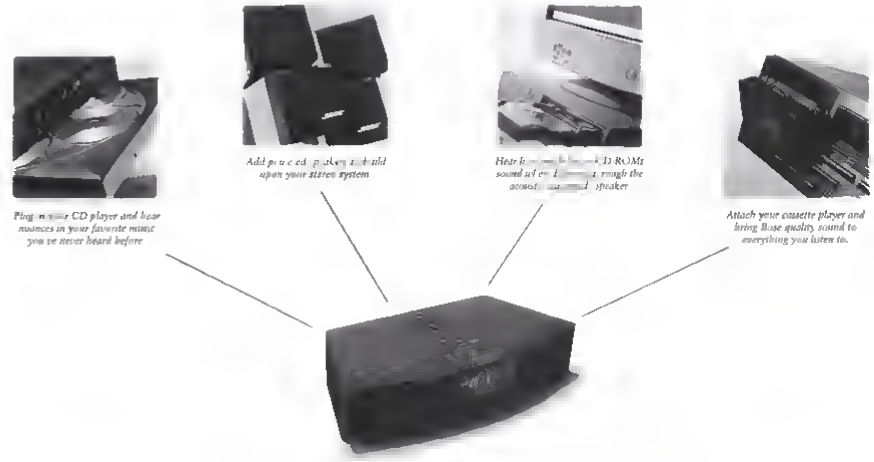
I go downstairs, but not to the basement In the kitchen, I pour a third cup of coffee and pace So why is this my problem, anyway? I go to the living room and consider all the stuff that, according to my wife I'm supposed to care deeply about but don't Cutting the grass before it gets, say, a foot high (What's wrong with grass that's a foot high? I read once about a guy who was so pissed off by some neighborhood committee trying to get him to spruce up his place that he let his grass get nice and shaggy and then brought the lawn mower out and spelled his name in it Now *that's* taking possession) Cleaning gutters, weeding, painting She's right—that's stuff I don't worry about. Putting out the trash on trash day Not true this one I do Usually I just don't get upset about maggots in the trash cans

One day I came home from work and Karen was ripping out ivy, long tendrils that had innocently worked their way up the foundation and pushed runners up the porch rails I like ivy It covers It comforts

"I hate this ivy," she came over to my car to tell me "Look what it does"

Translation *You should have been on this problem*

Together, we looked Where once there was ivy climbing everywhere,



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what. A guy's coming this afternoon."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

In a little while, as I sit at the dining-room table going through my briefcase, figuring out what work absolutely has to be done between now and 9:00 AM Monday, Karen sweeps through with the announcement that she's taking the kids to the playground, which is a message of *At least somebody here doesn't let them just watch TV all day.*

WHEN THEY GO, I have a beer make myself a fat turkey sandwich, consider what got me to this spot. A plunge into ancient history. Mom's list of what need-ed to be done around the house hung day and night from a shiny metal clip by the back door: unending improvements streamed from Dad's workshop. Her aversion to dirt was such that she scrubbed the word *greasy* of its soft sibi-lant s. "Someone's greezzee fingers all over my kitchen cabinets" was the signal not to get in there to wipe the evidence away but a warning to stay out. A towel would snap only she could give the kitchen the moral attention it deserved. My job, along with keeping my hands clean, was to hold the ladder for Dad, cut the grass, take out the trash, help him dig holes for a new fence, et cetera, et cetera.

What was the point? All that per-fect home rigor was not a path to any-thing except more rigor, I decided. The next decision, the one that drives my wife crazy was easy. Nobody's ever going to catch me giving a shit about stuff that pointless.

I'm on beer two when the animal control guy shows. He opens the plastic bag into which I've delicately spooned what I'm thinking is rodent turd, picks one up with his fingers, sniffs it, and says without the slight-est trace of annoyance, 'This is a piece of Styrofoam. You know, the stuff they put in pots. It's supposed to look like dirt."

He sniffs it again. "Yeah," he says. 'Styrofoam."

"I noticed it didn't have any odor," I offer, as if I'd suspected Styrofoam all along.

"Yeah," he nods, looking around the basement. "Things look pretty good, very solid. This is a well-made house." He gazes around again. "Yeah, I could try to sell you a bug job, but you really don't need it. Look at this."

He points to a beam with a raised reddish line. "This is where beetles came in, took a bite, and must have de-cided they didn't like the taste. No damage. None whatsoever." His eyes sweep the basement. "Yeah, this place looks solid. It's a nice house."

THE ANIMAL-CONTROL guy opens the plastic bag, picks out one of the rodent turds I've collected from the basement, and then sniffs it.

Third beer. Karen still gone with the kids. And now I've got her—no animals, nothing, a big deal over something that doesn't even exist. But I know that's not the problem, and drinking softens me anyway. I wan-der the house, moving toys, shoes, books to the right rooms, which seems like half the battle with kids. The lowering autumn sun slants in, picking off strange shapes of wood-work and suddenly I remember this. When Sam was three, just getting to-let trained, Karen and I were eating dinner in the kitchen when he walked in, pulled his pants down, and dropped a pile right on the floor. Karen scooped him up and disap-peared upstairs. I didn't budge. I sat there finishing my dinner, leaving the shit right where it was. Not that I expected her to clean it up. I simply didn't see any reason why it couldn't wait. When Karen came down, well, I got the response I wanted. No one else, she was quite sure, would simply sit there like that and continue eating. I nodded—exactly my point.

Now I wash my face and an ugly thought hits home. There is no differ-ence between painting broom handles and ignoring shit on the floor. No difference in degree, anyway. So I'm really as lame as the broom handle painter in my ardor to be so different.

Immediately, I make a decision. I decide my mother is very funny. There is no other way to look at people who paint the ends of broom handles espe-cially when you realize that you're just like them. Who, if not Mom herself, will maintain unwavering vigilance against those conspiring forces trying to bring her down: dirt and disorder, and a son who can't even drill a proper hole in a broom handle? Who indeed.

And me? I consider what the bug guy said. We've got a nice house. It makes me smile. Why not? Might as well enjoy it, I say it out loud. "We've got a nice house." It feels as if I'm on to something new. I consider a fourth beer but realize that might get me cleaning woodwork or something.

MY FAMILY GETS BACK about 4:00 PM. I hug my boys almost too enthusiasti-cally, toying with Karen for just a mo-ment—I know she'll read the hugs as my ignoring her. But then I shoo the kids upstairs. Karen's gone to the kitchen, I come up to her from behind, put my arms around her. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry I couldn't just go down and deal with it right away and be done with it. It's dumb. I'm sorry."

Her body in my arms is stiff. Those three *sorrys* sounded a little overdone to me, too.

"So what did he find?" she says.

I tell her how the animal guy picked it, sniffed it.

"Yuck!" She twists away.

"It was Styrofoam."

"Styrofoam!"

"Styrofoam. You know, the stuff you put in pots to look like dirt."

"Oh. No animals?"

"And he says we've got a nice house."

Karen looks at me for a moment, her face blank, as if she didn't hear.

"He liked our house!" I repeat.

She sighs, opens the dishwasher, and unloads it.

HOW FAR MUST YOU GO TO FEEL LIKE A MAN?



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menace

Call Us When He Kills You

They say it's not over until one of you is dead. I just want to make sure it's not me.



By Francine Maroukian

FOR THE LAST eight years, I've been stalked by a man I do not know. I've never had a conversation with him. I know his name, but I won't say it. I know what he looks like as well as I know the stoops and curbs of my own neighborhood, but I don't know where he comes from, how he lives, or why he chose me. As I write this, he's in jail, but he still sends me pornographic magazines, and he still calls me almost every day.

I don't know how it will end, but this is how it began.

FALL 1989. Early one Sunday morning, I'm jolted awake by pounding on my front door. I roll into my robe and rush to discover Leslie, my four-hundred-pound, not-quite-right neighbor from down the hall, dressed as usual in a rumpled, food-stained shirt and blue jeans so filthy they've acquired the texture of greasy canvas. There's another guy with him, standing slightly behind, an odd ball in a ridiculous getup—dark sunglasses and an aviator cap.

"My friend wants to meet you," Leslie pants, and I get a whiff of the chocolate I can see caked in the corner of his cracked lips.

"Leslie," I say firmly, employing the language and tone our building's tenants have learned to use during these occasional episodes, "this is not allowed."

I start to shut the door, but Leslie's friend sticks his foot in the way. I step back, pulling the door with me for momentum, then slamming it.

Back in bed, as my breathing slows and my brain unwinds, I remember the weight of his friend's foot against the door and play *Where's Waldo?* with that face, trying to count the number of times I've seen him in my building.

A few weeks later, I'm meeting a friend to see a matinee at a movie theater about twenty blocks from my apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Nancy is waiting in line when I arrive. As I approach, she gestures to me.

"Come here," Nancy whispers. "Near me. There's some freak over there staring at you."

The sun is so bright, I can't get more than a flickering glimpse, but I recognize the guy weaving between the cars parked along the curb. He's wearing those dark sunglasses and that stupid aviator cap.

I begin to get a lot of hang-up calls. I mention the situation to a few friends, and they all have the same easy solution: "Just change your number." As though this hasn't crossed my mind a hundred times. But what should I do about my listed business phone, the number I make my living from? No one has an easy answer to that ques-



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menace

tion I am a caterer I've built my business exclusively by word of mouth and my livelihood is not going to continue to be very lively if all of a sudden my phone number becomes a big secret The phone company's suggestions (call forwarding or a mechanical message that automatically gives out the new number) aren't much help

SPRING 1990 Some evenings, returning to my neighborhood and passing the pizza parlor on Broadway, I see the stalker sitting at the long, narrow Formica counter in front of the window and facing the street, staring at the sidewalk as if it were a television His skin has the slick, thick quality of unworked Silly Putty and the earflaps of his aviator cap dangle down on either side of his face like a pair of broken wings When he sees me he gets up and drifts outside following me like a vapor trail

The first time I'm finally able to get a phone call through to my neighborhood precinct, the detective turns out to be much more curious about me than the stalker

"There's a guy following you, and he won't leave you alone?" the detective asks "Well what do you look like?"

SUMMER 1990 I've never been crazy about the trip down to my basement The elevator is slow and squeaky and the basement itself is a labyrinth of rooms with low, uneven ceilings rough, painted stone walls and overhead pipes, all wrapped in a thick, padded silence that not even the prolonged shriek of a car alarm can pierce One Thursday afternoon while doing laundry I turn the corner to discover the stalker hunched over one of the dryers, head thrust deep inside, hands moving in a steady dog paddle motion to scoop up my clothes and inhale them I freeze, then backpedal to the elevator, pressing and pressing the buttons until the old door creaks shut

JACK, MY BUILDING'S super, installs convex mirrors in the elevators and hallways so I can see blind spots He warns all the tenants to tighten up security at the intercom, and he puts an alarm on the basement door

Barred from my building, the stalker now sits motionless for hours, like a camel, on the neighboring stoops while I wonder if I'll ever manage to get to the post office without being spotted When Jack spreads my story from super to super, the stalker is moved down the street and off our block, but on weekends, when most of the supers are off duty, the stalker scuttles back up my block in quick, short surges, like a centipede

May 23 1995
dear FRANCINE.
please stop HAVING protection order against me. I never did not
harassment TO EVER since the time LESLIE introduced us.

Some days, my mailbox is so full of stuff from the stalker that it springs open as soon as I turn the key, spilling out flyers, thick, colorful catalogs, invitations to *Star Trek* conventions and brochures for vocational-training schools I also get letters There's no mistaking his envelopes addressed in distinctive block printing that veers down sharply to the right as though his unbalanced teeter-totter brain has concluded that my first name is lighter than my last

FALL 1990 I'm always startled when one of those take-out menus gets shoved under my door It can sound so loud—like a crack of thunder One afternoon, I stomp over and use my toe to pull a new menu under the door But the paper is stuck As I bend over to pick it up I see that the menu isn't a menu, it's a note from the stalker

He's right there on the other side of my door, still holding on to the paper Only a fingertip away



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You don't have to be a cop-show connoisseur to recognize that the two-six in the borough of Manhattan looks nothing like most of the precincts on TV. It's much dingier, the lighting is worse, there is very little fresh air, and even less hope.

The detectives act as though I were strolling past their construction site instead of standing before them asking for help. By the time I get to the right desk, I'm walking with my shoulders rolled forward like a newly endowed sixth grader. I sit down, wrapping my legs around the chair to steady myself and folding my hands in my lap. I show the detective the answering machine tapes and the mail I've gotten. He doesn't even glance down. He rakes his eyes over me—taking in my nail polish and jewelry, looking for anything bright, tight, short, or pretty—anything that would make me responsible for having attracted a stalker.

His questions all suggest the same thing. Do I know this guy? Is he my boyfriend? Did I do something to him?

I am getting so many hang-ups that I hesitate every time the phone rings. The stalker starts talking, and I stop answering the phone altogether.

My message tapes begin to fill up with his voice: an eerie, subdued trancelike lisp, like Mike Tyson on quaaludes. He repeats the same message over and over. "Call me, come visit me. Call me, come visit me." And he always identifies himself as Clark Kent.

A few of my friends think it's amusing to bait the stalker by picking up the phone when he's leaving a message and shouting into the receiver. I try to grab the phone away from them. I know I'll pay for their indulgences with return calls clustered in groups of twenty or thirty around the crazy people times of midnight and 6:00 A.M.

OCTOBER 1992 I'm at a meeting at the Guggenheim Museum, bidding on a $26,000 catering job, standing with the client and a museum representative in the center of the rotunda, where parties are held, when I spot the stalker. He's sitting outside, staring at me through the enormous Fifth Avenue window. I'm usually a whiz at these meetings, but now I can't concentrate. What will I do if he comes inside? How am I going to get past him to leave? The others sense my distraction, and when they ask me what's wrong, I blurt out the truth. The museum's chief of security calls the police.

The squad cars arrive with curb-bumping urgency. The officers push the stalker against a concrete wall, restraining his hands behind his back and asking me, "Can you identify this man?" The stalker's face is turned to one side and flattened against a cold cement wall, revealing only a single staring eye and a gaping mouth. He looks doomed. He looks like a dead fish on ice.

I step forward to identify him, but somehow as I start to speak, as my thoughts pass through the emotional tunnel that connects impulse to action, what begins as determination comes out sounding more like defeat.

"Why are you doing this to me?" I wail.

As the police lead the stalker toward a squad car, one of them asks me offhandedly for my order of protection. I tell him I don't have one. They stop. They stare at me, shaking their heads as they uncuff the stalker. I watch him disappear down the sidewalk, rubbing his wrists, but the police don't let me off quite so easily. Without an order of protection, the stalker might be creating a nuisance, but he's not committing a crime. Don't I understand, never, ever to call 911 unless I'm being "officially" harassed?

By the time I get home, my answering machine is already jammed with messages. I don't bother listening. I lean out my window and look toward the end of the block, trying to see if the stalker is calling from the corner phone. I'm not sure what to do. All the experts seem to make the same recommendation. Unless you're a celebrity, change your phone number and move. This seems like useless advice. Stalkers stalk. If I were to move, I would have to change my favorite restaurants and stores, my doctor and my dentist. My friends would need to move as well, since the stalker already knows where most of them live. I'd have to give up my business and leave the city. In my neighborhood, people know me and keep an eye out for me and are willing to help. Moving to another neighborhood would be like entering the witness-protection program without the protection.

So instead I make a smaller world. Give up riding my bike and playing tennis in Riverside Park. No longer sit in outdoor cafés. Stop answering the doorbell, whenever I hear the buzzer, I lean out the window to see who's leaving the building, yelling to call back my friends, messengers, or the UPS guy. I never sit with my back to a door and whenever people invite me someplace new, I ask so many detailed questions about the design and layout that my friends remark on my newfound obsession with architecture. They think I'm just eccentric, and I'm happy to let them think that. I don't like to talk about the stalker because, naturally, most people are curious about him. What does he look like? Where does he live? Where does he get his money? These kinds of questions feel like the stalking itself—an attempt to get me to acknowledge and respond to this weirdo who won't leave me alone. I don't want to know anything about him. My inability to talk to people about this major disruption in my life makes me feel even more isolated.

Calling on my early Catholic training, I put my faith in rituals—a whole new set of them. I learn to split my concentration and scan corners before I turn, elevators before I enter. I wake up in the middle of the night to unlock and relock my doors. I look under beds, in closets, and behind doors. I buy a see-through shower curtain so I don't have to waste time easing the bathroom. I eventually get to the point where I can't get back to sleep until I've checked the ledge outside my seventh-floor bedroom, because by now the stalker is everywhere.

The first small crack I see in the police stone wall occurs in 1993, when a detective tells me, "Maybe I'll take a drive over to the guy's apartment and scare him."

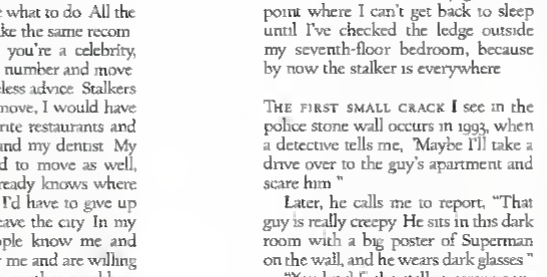
Later, he calls me to report, "That guy is really creepy. He sits in this dark room with a big poster of Superman on the wall, and he wears dark glasses."

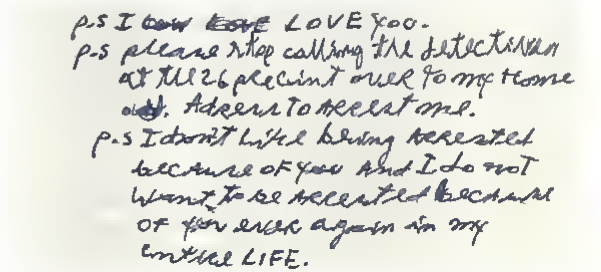
"You bitch!" the stalker screams into my answering machine following the visit from the police. This is the first time he's ever sworn. "You bitch! You bitch! Come outside right now!"

EARLY 1994 Back at the two-six, I end up at the desk of a new officer, Curtis Merchant. Once again, I methodically lay out my stalker kit—the phone tapes, letters, gift subscriptions to magazines, and dozens of invitations to *Star Trek* conventions, all signed "From your boyfriend, Clark Kent." Detective Merchant picks up the answering-machine cassette, flipping it back and forth between his thumb and index finger like it's a playing card and he's about to trump.

"I like this kind of case," he tells me as the other detectives look on from behind their desks. "I'll take it."

On the first of the long summer-holiday weekends, my neighborhood is a tumbleweed town—not a soul in sight. I'm sealed in my apartment with the air conditioner cranked to cadaver, watching Sunday-afternoon movies, when the doorbell starts buzzing—long, painful blasts that I time like contractions: six to eight minutes in duration, ten to twelve minutes apart. I call 911 and mention De-





tective Merchant's name.

The stalker is gone by the time the police get to my door. But that doesn't matter. This time, the responding officer makes out an incident-information slip. A tiny piece of paper, no more substantial than an elementary-school hall pass. But with the complaint number from that slip, Detective Merchant can now assign a case number.

It's only taken about four years and ten minutes.

On July 26, 1994, the criminal court of the city of New York issues my first temporary order of protection. The day after my order of protection goes into effect, the assistant district attorney orders a phone company trap placed on my line. Between noon on July 29 and midnight on July 30, the stalker makes the following calls to me:

July 29: 12:04 P.M., 1:46 P.M., 3:51 P.M., 4:04 P.M., 4:50 P.M., 5:00 P.M., 5:05 P.M., 5:12 P.M., 5:24 P.M., 5:30 P.M., 5:42 P.M.

July 30: 12:03 A.M., 7:28 A.M., 8:58 A.M., 9:59 A.M., 10:10 A.M., 10:58 A.M., 12:19 P.M., 12:59 P.M., 1:59 P.M., 2:59 P.M., 3:14 P.M., 3:58 P.M., 5:00 P.M., 9:29 P.M., 11:59 P.M.

Every stalker sighting in my neighborhood, every letter or phone call to me, is now a violation. Between July 1994 and February 1995, the court issues twenty-six additional orders of protection against the stalker: six in August, five in September, two in October, four in November, four in December, four in January, and one in February.

FEBRUARY 1995 The assistant district attorney calls with good news. The court has ordered the stalker into a residential psychiatric-treatment program. The first thing I do is take a long walk in Riverside Park. Alone. It's the everyday things about life in New York I've missed most. I take the subway to the World Trade Center and walk up the length of the city. I stop anywhere I want and eat lunch in an outdoor café. And I sleep. Sometimes for as long as sixteen hours. I am suddenly years worth of tired.

I get calls from the stalker's psychiatrists and social workers, who seem as loony as he is. They harangue me to "discuss his [*continued on page 142*]

Some of the items I've received from the stalker over the years:
20 gift subscriptions to magazines from *NBA Inside Stuff* to *Hot Sex Calls*; more than 90 invitations to *Star Trek* conventions, hundreds of assorted catalogs, enrollment in various clubs, from something called Creation to a sci-fi comic-book group; 47 brochures for vocational-training programs, multiple brochures for contraceptive devices; 1 black-and-white elementary-school picture of the stalker; 2 Christmas cards; 4 Valentine's Day cards; dozens of empty envelopes, some marked "From your boyfriend, Clark Kent"; scores of letters and postcards; thousands of voice messages captured on tape; 1 plastic bag full of jagged shards of broken glass hurled into the video store I'd just left.

Esquire

The Man Who Loved Women

(Of Hef and heartbreak)

By Bill Zehme



So now he leaves the property. It cannot be—but is! Now he is out among us—his children, his children's children—at the Opium Den, the Garden of Eden, the Whisky Bar, the Coconut Club, the Viper Room. He's actually been sighted at raves—his torte! He never even went to his own clubs when he had them. But now! Here is the mack daddiest of them all, making the scene, spoiling for action, cruising the spots lamping the ladies, surveying that which he wrought by never going anywhere! 'What the hell was it I was supposed to go out for?" he once said, quite rhetorically, and you knew exactly what he meant therein. That was Hef. Forty years indoors, housebound Dionysus, man of Mansions, pajama clad, swigging the Pepsi, clenching the pipe, making Philosophy, making chicks, telling us to go out and play and not worry about it while he stayed home on his Round Rotating Bed and had more fun anyway.

Look at him now! Hermetically unsealed, emerged from the gates, charting the new real world, night after night—he is wearing suits, for God's sake! He flashes the rabbit head cuff links and shifts his long, pointy jaw above the open white collar. It's *him*, in a Very Real Sense, as he would say. He even looks like him, especially when he's dancing. He can't stop dancing! That would be the Hefdance, as seen on his various television specials—a strange gyration all his own, slippery shuffles and twists, elbows pumping but fast, a Caucasian disco inferno, burning, burning. The girls keep pace somehow. Never mind his age, for he never has. But still—a *septuagenarian* swinger, indeed the chairman emeritus of sex American style, known today on his company Web site as "the reigning king of the cocktail nation and one of the towering figures of the twentieth century." But of course. And the Gen Xers know it, certainly. They bow, they flock tribleside. *"You're the man!" "You're the god!" "You rule!"* Hef just beams, amazed that they remember, although how could they not? He sips his Jack Daniel's and, ugh, Diet Coke—it is alas a Pepsiless cocktail nation. But he complains not at all. "With Jack in it, you don't really notice," he assures. Then. "Got these ladies some more champagne!" Blonds in rubber garments flank and squeal and bop. "Go Hef! Go Hef!" they chant. Oh, yes, the Party is back on! The Party is everywhere! It is a happening most groovy, let me tell you. Et cetera, as he would say.

Welcome to Hef's Epilogue, in which Hugh Marston Hefner, the most famous magazine editor in the history of the world, reclaims youth and reminds himself of who he was before lately. "Everything old is new again," he keeps saying over and over, by which he could, and does, mean himself. "It's part of the whole retro thing, et cetera." Thus, the ceaseless cultural slide into hedonism redux, wherein even the American president gets to fool around and almost nobody cares as long as it hurts no one. ("I just wish he had better taste," Hef says with a sigh.) Forty-five years ago, he saw the future, and then it came, and then it went, but it is here again, fortified by youth, and so is he—although he didn't plan it this way.

Hef, you see, never guessed that he would be out painting Los Angeles scarlet. In truth, he has been *pried* loose from his legendary paradisiacal bastion, from his beloved Playboy Mansion West, by friends who seek only to distract him. Hef is experiencing that which other men know all too well but never suspected Hugh Hefner could. He is feeling the quiet pang that binds victims of love torn asunder. Hef has heartache. His wife has moved out on him, with their two young sons. She has moved into the house that he bought for them on the adjacent property, right over the large stone wall. The implications resonate in dark poetry. There is no getting around it. Hef, like never before, is hung up on the girl next door.

"Here I am again at a kind of crossroad," he says with a small shrug, and that is where I find him: at his crossroad, in black satin pajamas, one Tuesday afternoon in late February. I have come to Holmby Hills, to the Mansion, to Hef, to assess his heart, to document his moment of torment, to get in on the Party. The task, I knew, would be arduous and require months of personal attention. But societal benefit loomed large. However Hugh Hefner withstood marital discord would, no doubt, serve as an example to mankind for future generations. He quickly saw the importance of the endeavor. "My first reaction was, Maybe this is the wrong time—let's wait. And then I realized, almost as an afterthought a day or two later, *No, this is the right time!*" He is a man legendarily unafraid of being chronicled, a man who understands his place in history and is ever ready to share it with others. 'I'm an open book," he says brightly, "with illustrations!" Indeed, in the upper reaches of the house, locked away in a small room, there are nearly twelve hundred elaborately bound, museum quality Scrapbooks of his Life So Far. He meticulously oversees the compulsion of each volume, writes captions himself, does not skip over any parts, dark or light. "They are the footprints in the sand," he says wistfully, significantly. They exist to tell him where he has been and to suggest where he might go. Now he needs the chapter covering what he confesses to be "this rather difficult emotional time," and I have been permitted to take the notes.

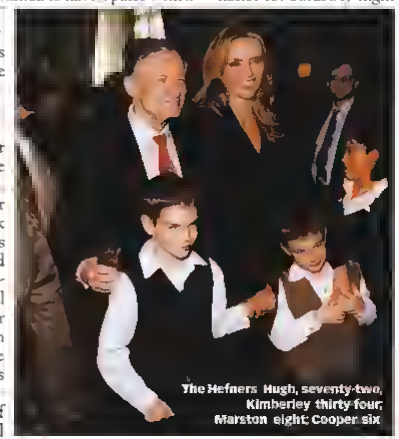
Mansion Regular, Male: "Hef's putting his guns back on. You can only have your balls squeezed so long. Oh, he loves her. But there's gonna be some changes. I know one thing: She doesn't want to give up the power of being Mrs. Hefner."

Hef Healing Night, One. He knows the scene already. He has been out for what, a month already, looking for, what, hope again, maybe. Pictures have turned up in tabloids. Most visible frolic to date: The January night at the Garden of Eden, a pajama party celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Playboy Channel: there was Hef, surrounded by Playmates inserting fingers and tongues into his mouth and ears while camera strobes flashed. This was the first public sign of trouble in paradise. Playboy Enterprises would, within days, on January 20, issue the statement of his separation from Kimberley Conrad Hefner. Miss January 1988. Playmate of the Year 1989, whom he shocked the world by marrying that same year, whereupon she became known as his Playmate for a Lifetime and, more intimately, as his Kimberella. She bore him two sons, Marston Glenn, now eight, and Cooper Bradford, now six, both of whom possess a remarkable angular, wiry resemblance to their father. The separation announcement cited "differing interests" and, as preemptive caveat, "no third-party involvement on either side." With Hef, randy speculation comes necessarily. But, in fact, he had been a one-woman Hef throughout all ten years with Kimberley—his first-ever monogamous love, no less. Even so, his beautiful blond wife had begun leaving the marriage long before the world heard. Seven years earlier, Hef had acquired a Malibu beach house for her as a refuge from the corporate hurly-burly of the Playboy Mansion. Then, two summers ago, he bought her the house next door to the Mansion for $7 million, on their seventh wedding anniversary. She had taken up full-time occupancy by early this year. "I just started thinkin'," Hef says. "If she wanted to have a place with a little privacy, let's make it adjacent."

But now for tonight, a Tuesday. Cabaret virtuoso Bobby Short is opening in Hollywood. I get the call from Hefner's wry and indomitable executive assistant, Mary O'Connor, in whose Mansion office Hef squats on the floor most weekdays, doing magazine business—seat of the empire, Mary's carpet, sometimes her couch, too. (He always did work on the floor or on the Bed, always hunched over strewn papers and photos, now the residual lower-back pain requires an occasional elastic brace, the only thing he ever wears under his pajamas.) I am asked to meet him after ten at the Catalina Bar & Grill. Mary says Playmates will be present, it is unspoken, but implicit, that Hef should be seen with beautiful women whenever out. It is like a built-in dating service. At the club, Hef alights from his long, black Mercedes limo with the HMH 1 plates. His entourage includes his personal doctor and friend, Mark Saginor (who briefly moved into the Mansion when Hef suffered a stroke in 1985, from which he miraculously recovered within two weeks), plus two blonds, a brunette, and a security guy. Hef introduces the women to me: "These, of course, are Dr. Saginor's nurses." Much laughter. One dusky blond is Karen McDougal, 1998 Playmate of the Year, she sits beside Hef in our round booth. I suggest how remarkable it is to be Out with Hef, since he is famous for never doing such. Miss McDougal looks at me as if I were an idiot, says with incredulity: "He never goes out?" Hefner-tan lore is new to her.

He is courtly and debonair with the women, also paternalistic and instructive. Never is he brash or slick in the Guidonesque sense. He tells them that Boboy Short performed on both of his memorable television series, *Playboy's Penthouse* (in the sixties) and *Playboy After Dark* (in the seventies), and also in the Playboy Clubs of old. They nod. Hef sings quietly along with Short on many standard tunes. "Just dum-rect your feet! To the sun-nnnyyyy side of the street!" On raucous numbers, Hef and the women raise their arms, sway, snap fingers: he is happy. Learning that Short was born in Danville, Illinois, he brightens and softly says, "I first got laid in Danville! Millie and I went there." Millie Williams was his first wife, mother of Playboy chairman and CEO Christie and individualistic David, a computer whiz. Millie now works in Playboy corporate human resources in Chicago. "Danville had a reputation as a kind of wild place at the time," he continues. "That's probably why we went there." It happened at the Wolford Hotel in spring of 1948, Hef was twenty-two, he and Millie, both students at the University of Illinois, posed for pictures in front of the hotel. The pictures can be found in Volume 41 of the Scrapbooks. Hef and Millie have not been as close as they were before he married Kimberley. Not his choice, he says a little sadly.

All present buzz about a party being planned in Hef's honor for Saturday night. It is to take place at the estate of a friend, Dr. Saginor, a warmhearted rogue bachelor, mid-fifties, has been inviting as many beautiful women as he can find, he is quite excited. Hef sighs, says with bemused patience, "They're calling it a *pre*-birthday party." Dr. Saginor has prescribed it, he has seen the heartache Hef tries to hide, he hates it. Of Kimberley's final exit and its effect on Hef, the doctor whispers to me, "He was squashed like a June bug."


The Hefners: Hugh, seventy-two; Kimberley, thirty-four; Marston, eight; Cooper, six.

Not that he shows it. Not even to his friends will he show it. How can he? (Never mind that they can tell anyway.) He feels a solemn responsibility to all men. We need Hef to be the happiest of hepcats. While we may toil in dreary lives of drudgery, we envision him doing whatever he wants, because he can. Usually in the vicinity of naked women. He is a comfort that way. He is the dream of our collective inner adolescent, fantasy is his life. 'I'm still that boy who dreamed the dreams," he loves to say, full of wonder, as self-aware as any grown boy alive. And he made sure it would be so. He is a genius of self-reinvention, has been all his life. Most dramatically, with *Playboy* in 1953, he created a magazine that created him. The repressed midwestern Methodist became the living symbol of sybaritic engorgement and a millionaire because of it, today, his personal fortune is said to approach $400 million. (The Playboy corporate empire, meanwhile, is worth roughly a strong $375 million.) Soon, he who never thought to masturbate before turning nineteen would go on to have fabulous guilt-free consensual sex with a thousand women, per his own modest estimate. "Am I happy?" he said in 1962. "I wouldn't trade places with anyone else in the world." Men have wanted to trade places with him ever since. Until now, maybe.

All things considered, however, Hefner looks good. He is a most chipper customer. He greets whomever he encounters with an inimitable "Howdy-howdy-howdy!" There is spring in his every velvet-slippered step. 'I couldn't be in a better place," he assures me, after he has glided down his Gothic



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staircase into the Great Hall, turned left into the Living Room, then settled onto his striped baronial sofa in the Mansion Library beyond. (In the Hef hemisphere, formal capitalization is a way of life. You get used to it.) His face is smooth and pink and in no real need of the tucking he has been secretly pondering of late. ("The only thing that might keep him from doing it is that he absolutely *hates* pain," one of his friends tells me.) His seventy-second birthday, impossibly, is still several weeks away, but he appears to be no more than late fiftyish. Moreover, his mind is as quick as ever and only occasionally forgetful, he terms such lapses "senior moments"—and then only among cronies. He is never not busy—at his magazine's Chicago headquarters, he is known with fond aggravation as the World's Wealthiest Copy Editor—and he is never not hopeful. He sees romance in life's every fillip. No jaded mogul, he is a chronic rhapsodizer: he slips into reverie whenever considering his considerable lot. 'Lucky man!" he thinks when he thinks of himself—and that is not seldom.

'Even during this transitional time, I just feel . . . fortunate," he is saying while alternating slugs of Diet Pepsi and Evian water. "It's also, you know, a *revitalizing* time, too. I think of it, in a very real sense, more as a new beginning than an ending, because . . . I'm not sure there's going to be any ending. My comment when I got married was, Now I have the final chapter for my book—the marriage, the continuity of children, the toys scattered in the Great Hall, the Children at Play signs on the property. Who knew that not only would there be a final chapter, but now also an epilogue? F. Scott Fitzgerald said there are no second acts in American lives. Well, we know that's not true! Not if you play it right. It's a miniseries!"

From Volume 1,237 of Hugh Hefner's Scrapbooks

Memo from HMH to David Wolper, 9/12/95

Subject: The Hugh Hefner Story

Prologue: The Wedding—The Culmination of All My Dreams

As previously suggested, I think our story should begin with the wedding, here among the lush surroundings of the Playboy Mansion West, the rolling hills, redwood forest, fountains, and waterfalls, with peacocks, flamingos, and crested cranes strutting the lawn. Friends and family have gathered for the Marriage of the Decade. Mr. Playboy is about to marry his Playmate for a Lifetime. The wedding will occur on the front lawn by the Wishing Well, where Hefner proposed . . .

It *is* a miniseries! Or it will be one day. Hef's miniseries—his magnum opus of self-mythography—now temporarily languishes in preproduction quagmire. Plus, life got complicated. The memo to his Hollywood producing partner Wolper runs more than seventy pages. (Among epic memo writers, the Hefner legend towers, as his minion would woefully attest.) Hef did not like any of the scripts submitted, so he dictated his life *dramatis*, point by point, as a screenplay compass. He has long seen his earthbound existence as a movie anyway, albeit one in which most of the action, wedding aside, is interior. It comes up a lot. "My life has been rather like a movie for a numbee of years . . ." he began one sentence in a memo circulated among *Playboy* editors in early 1988, providing groundwork for an internally infamous article called "The Great Palimony Caper." This was to be Hefner's indignant reaction to a misbegotten, quickly dropped palimony suit filed by Carne Leigh, his omnivorous hellcat chatelaine, or Special Lady, of five years. Anyway, once Miss Leigh stormed out of his life in January of 1988, Kimberley Conrad—Playmate of that very Month—would within two weeks capture his fancy, love would bloom, and this, Hef insisted, would make for a happy ending to an otherwise fairly sordid magazine piece. As such, his palimony-story memo continued: ' . . . but there has never been a more magic night than the first one Kimberley and I spent together. If this had really been a movie, that night there would have been strings, and perhaps a little Bobby Hackett horn."

The one who culminated his dreams, who became his most special Special Lady, who is now his Special Neighbor Lady—and who has, most probably, screwed up Hef's whole miniseries prologue idea—was twenty-four when Cupid drew bow. Also, per Playmate Data Sheet, she was 36-24-36, five foot nine, and 122 pounds, and she aspired "to be financially self-sufficient, do a cover for *Playboy*, and travel the world". turnoffs included "gossip, pretentious people, and early-morning phone calls." Hef suggested this characterization of her in one palimony memo: 'From out of the northland came an Alabama-born, Vancouver-bred angel to turn all the stress and pain into sunshine and happiness." (Hey, he's a romantic guy!)

Here, then, was Kimberley, already known around the house as a woman who could siphon oxygen from male lungs, one way or another: 'I'd seen guys go down in flames trying to get her attention," says Hef now. 'Which impressed me. There was an aloofness. She wasn't an easy lady." Back from Canada, she was boarding at the Mansion, in the guest cottage where most Playmates stay, working with Helmut Newton on a motorcycle pictorial. Hef was screening a pair of Yves Montand films for friends over two nights in the Living Room, each night, he stopped her in the Great Hall and asked her to join him, she declined both entreaties. "I was afraid," she later recounted in her Playmate of the Year video. "Plus, I'm not the type of person you have a one-night stand with." After the second film ended, he approached her again. "I told her that I was really interested in her and would like to spend some time with her. And she said, 'Well, I really don't know you.' And I said, 'How are you going to get to know me if we don't spend some time together?'" (*Hef's Line!*) "And that line—the simple logic of that—from that moment on, everything changed! We spent that evening together." They repaired upstairs to his quarters, "just talking until four in the morning," she said, "and laughing about everything." This was their Falling in Love Scene. Fate and chemistry intermingled! They had loved each other from afar all along and hadn't known it! Now they knew! She moved in for good shortly thereafter, bringing two dogs and a cat. Hef recalls: "Within a relatively few months, I was thinking the unthinkable."

Memo to Attorney Tony Glassman, 2/17/88

Subject: My Comments on Palimony Complaint

Throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s I have had a series of serious romantic, live-in relationships. All of these women knew full well that there was little or no possibility that I would ever consider marrying again. These relationships included Cynthia Maddox, 1961–1963, Mary Warren, 1963–1967, Barbi Benton, 1969–1976, Sondra Theodore, 1976–1981, Shannon Tweed, 1981–1983, and Carne Leigh, 1983–January, 1988 . . .

When he goes out, he goes out late. His early evenings are ritualistic events of socialization, carved in rock, immovably

scheduled Monday night is Manly Night, when he bonds with male cohorts who eat turkey dinner in front of him while he drinks Jack-and-Pepsi (Hefner never dines with guests; his last meal of the day is consumed after midnight, usually in the Master Bedroom.) Wednesday is Card Night, more men, gin rummy. (During the seventies, before his world settled, Wednesday was allegedly known as Orgy Night.) Tuesday and Thursday are Family Nights, on which he and Kim and Marston and Cooper gather in nuclear fashion, often to watch TV or movies. (These have not been happening so much of late; she cancels regularly. Fretting for the boys. Hef keeps telling her, 'They want to see us *together*.") Friday and Saturday are Classic Movie Nights—old movies preceded by cocktails and open buffet for his Closely Knit Family of Friends, also known as the Gang. Sunday is First Run-Movie Night, a longtime staple at both the fabled original Chicago Mansion and at Mansion West. The Gang and various drop-in Hollywood types drink and graze again and save eight dollars apiece on going to actual movie theaters.

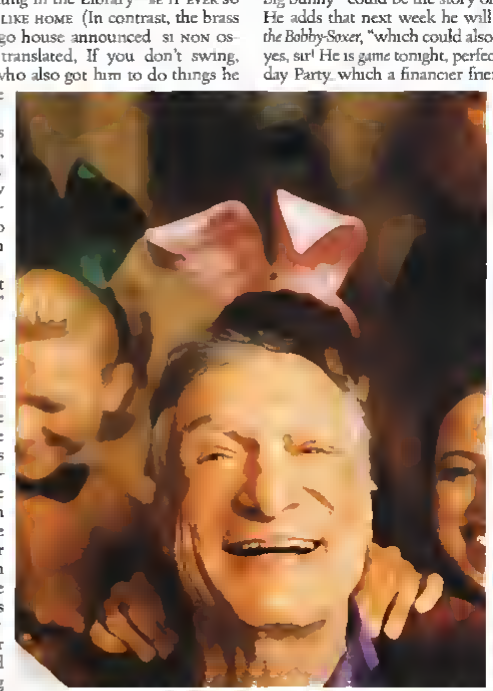
Nevertheless, when you inform people that you have spent time at the Playboy Mansion, the reaction is uniformly the same. Eyes widen, pupils dilate. You are asked about the naked Bunnies and Playmates. Winking and nudging occur. If only. It is not like that. Hasn't been since the arrival of Kimberley and especially since the boys were born. Bunnies no longer exist, since neither do Playboy Clubs. And Playmates are a vaporous presence, they inconspicuously take meals in a breakfast area called the Mediterranean Room and tend to hover slightly apart from the Gang. The Gang, meanwhile, is composed of a few dozen very pleasant, low-key people—many of them couples—ranging in age from fortyish to seventyish, almost none of whom work for Playboy but several of whom have familiar faces, albeit somewhat more matured than in memory (Tony Curtis. Bob Culp. Robert Blake. Dick Van Patten. Fred Dryer. Johnny Crawford. Larry Gelbart. Don Adams. And Playmates of rare and wondrous vintage.) It is not unlike being around friends of your parents', really. They move easily about Hef's Shangri-la. Their names are kept on the Gang List, permitting them access to the house at any time, although they mostly come when expected. Before they became later-life family guys, you would often see Nicholson and Beatty and Eastwood and Jimmy Caan. "They all came by because the chicks were here," Hef says. Now the big boys tend to show up only when live heavyweight prizefights are beamed in.

As the Gang leader, Hef presides passively and stands out among his crew only because everyone else wears clothes whereas he wears pajamas and a bathrobe. He is not one to hold court, he sort of wafts above and through the group. At the Chicago Mansion he was known to throw epic bacchanals that began after midnight and didn't end for days, during which time he never emerged from his bedroom. Mailer likened him, in that way, to Gatsby, a reference Hef prized. But he is a born host, therefore an uncomfortable guest. Still, he needs these people in their midst, he is more relaxed, less restless, more grounded, he is no good alone. Of his own hospitality and largesse, he will confess, "I do it for a very selfish reason. Everything is more enjoyable simply because it's shared." It is understood by all that there is nothing much anyone in the Gang can do for him except be there. So they come.

She appears behind him. He is seated, as is his custom, at the head of the Dining Room table, chatting with Gang members who are eating dinner. It is Friday night, ten minutes before the regular seven o'clock screening. (He is a stickler for rolling film precisely on time.) Tonight, it's John Huston's *Moby Dick*. But now she is here, without warning, back among his friends, who are also hers. She has come through the wall, from her adjacent property, accompanied by a dog the size of a pony. She taps his shoulder, and he looks up. "Hi!" she says brightly. You can tell much about a man's heart at such moments, it is in the eyes. His glow, they sparkle like some faceted mineral; his countenance is more alive than I have seen it. "*Kimber!*" he says, and rockets to his feet and flings his robed arms around her and plants a long kiss on her cheekbone. He has got it bad. But he can only engage her for a few minutes. He must fetch the production notes he has prepared on *Moby Dick*, which he will read to the assemblage before he waves down the lights in the Living Room. (He works on notes for the Friday classic films only, usually that afternoon, scrawling odd errata on yellow legal paper, it is his thrill.) She goes to the buffet table and fills a plate for herself. He wanders through the house to collect his guests, summoning them as is his custom with a low singsong call. "It's *mooooovie* time!" She sits down to eat with an old friend while the rest of the Gang files out. His hands, which grip the film notes, tremble a little more noticeably than usual as he sits on the arm of his deep leather couch and waxes eloquent about Ahab and the big white sperm whale. When the lights go down, he watches the movie nestled in the corner of his enormous couch, and there is no one next to him. I am told that there has been no one next to him for nearly eight years.

Mansion Regular, Female: "Everyone caters to Hefner because he's the money source. Kimberley doesn't have power in her own home. I told him that if he could make some adjustments, they could stick it out. He was very quiet."

The only women he ever left was his first wife. Since then, they have all left him, largely because they could not make him theirs alone. And yet he loved falling in love with each and every one of them. "For me, being in love is the very essence of being alive," he has said, convinced as others would not think likely. But it's true—he is happiest swooning, being the blithe love goon, stomach aflutter. By all accounts, his purest previous love was Barbi Benton, a privileged California beauty who was Barbara Klein before he renamed her in his magazine. "Barbi became a kind of Hollywood version of the teenage romance that I never really had when I was in high school," he says. Because Hollywood and high school are the most sacrosanct touchstones of his idealized life—one friend calls him High School Harry—Hef is saying that Barbi was an Extra-Special Lady. It was Barbi who, in 1971, found Mansion West for him, who helped oversee its Hefnerian domestication, who cross-stitched the pattern that hung in the Library—BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE, THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME. (In contrast, the brass door plaque at the Chicago house announced SI NON OSCILLAS NOLI TINTINNARE, translated, If you don't swing, don't ring.) It was Barbi who also got him to do things he did not like to do, like travel around the world. They would hop on his all-black Big Bunny jet, replete with Round Bed, shower, and disco—now gutted and flying commercially in Mexico—and go places. He has been loath to go anywhere ever since. "There's, you know, a lot of *inconvenience* in travel," he says a little grumpily.



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Love could always transport him, anyway, and he never even had to leave the house. So he loved Kimberley Conrad. "Despite the age disparity, we enjoy the same kind of life," he was seen professing in her *Playmate for a Lifetime* video. She was seated beside him in the Library as their love was being documented for eternity and also for sales in the U.S. and abroad, he was giddy, and she was both giggly and weepy. "She enjoys spending her evenings here with me and with friends and watching old movies and playing games and just being together." And so it was on the night of July 23, 1988—six months after their first Big Night—that he led her out of the Game House, where she had just beaten him at Foosball, and over to the Wishing Well, where he did what he had not done since 1948, with Millie. He begged her hand in marriage. And Kim said, "Do I have to answer now?" And his jaw dropped. "Well, no," he said. But she recovered within seconds and said, "Of course I'll marry you!" The following July 1, they returned to the Well and pledged troth before friends and family. "You're *here!*" the pastor said to Hef, mock surprise, big joke, laughs all around. But the groom was serene, and Kimberella cried throughout, and he brushed her tears repeatedly and sighed dreamily each time he did so. They danced their first dance to 'As Time Goes By," from his favorite movie, *Casablanca*. He has always seen himself as Rick Blaine, waiting at the Paris train depot, waiting for Ilsa Lund, who never comes, reading her farewell letter in the rain, which blurs the ink. He has always seen himself as the guy left standing in the rain. "We've all been there," he tells me one afternoon in the Library, exactly where he cooed to his fiancée on videotape. "We've all had our punches in the gut."

Hef Healing Night, Two. The Saturday movie, poetically enough, is *Harvey*. "The relationship between a man and a big bunny—could be the story of my life," Hef tells the Gang. He adds that next week he will show them *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer*, "which could also be the story of my life!" Oh, yes, sir! He is game tonight, perfectly primed for his Pre-Birthday Party, which a financier friend named Len Ross is hosting at his nearby Coldwater Canyon estate—itself the former love nest of William Randolph Hearst and Marion Davies. Hearst died in bed there, JFK and Jackie spent part of their honeymoon there, now Hef is, more or less, redeclaring his singlehood there. Dr. Saginor has stocked the pond like a champion, at least one hundred extraordinary women have been invited, mostly by him. On Friday-night rounds with Hef, I had watched the dedicated doctor spread the word among lovelies—at Merv Griffin's swing dance boîte the Coconut Club, at the Brazilian techno rap club Mamagaya, at the tony Millennium, where Hef graciously withstood the advances of Playmates, previous and potential, all of whom somehow knew he would be there. By two in the morning most of the city's club pulchritude had been installed on the guest list. "When I went to parties in college," Hef told me, "the ratio of men to women was seven to one. After that, I made the pledge to reverse that ratio at any party I ever threw." His pupils have learned well.

After *Harvey*, he trots upstairs to put on a suit and splash on cologne, he enters his limo in a cloud of musk, carrying a traveler cocktail. He is most buoyant and a little nervous. (He is actually always a little nervous.) After wending up Ross's endless driveway, he steps directly into his past and also into his present. The women! Like an infestation, they are aswarm, cinched breathless in tiny dresses, it could be a silicone repository, so pneumatic is the faux-cleavage collective. (Hef, for the record, prefers God-given, but the world has changed, and he does adapt.) "This brings back great feelings of nostalgia," he says repeatedly, invoking memories of his long-gone infamous Midsummer Night's Dream parties. "Ex-

cept," he says, "if this were Midsummer Night's Dream, all these girls would be walkin' around in lingerie."

Bambini quickly set upon him. On the terrace, a gaggle moves forward to ask for a picture with him; they wish him a happy birthday and he says that his birthday is still weeks away. "Then what kind of party is this?" one asks. "It's a coming-out party," he says. 'Coming out of what?' "Coming out of a *marriage*!" Well, then. He slips away and tries to open a glass door that is locked; and from the inside, an exotic woman comes to the glass and places her full lips against it, and Hef leans forward and returns the gesture. Such flirtation, innocent in kind, consumes the night. An extravagant buffet is served, and the host makes a heartfelt toast to "a person who has done more to shape this century—in freedom of press, in freedom of speech, in standing up for what you believe in—than anybody! He's the reason we're all here living the good life!" Hef toasts, in return, to the future, which is taken to me in more of sime, and the celebrants cheer lustily. Afterward, downstairs in the host's private discotheque, Hef dances and dances with a young woman he met the night before at Millennium. Her name is Jaime Bergman; her blond hair is in a bun, her body is unfathomably proportioned and barely harnessed in a little red number. He is besotted with her; she will soon be a Playmate, month indeterminate, also she will be his own personal immediate future. He dances on, exhilarated, which seems to represent something larger to the assembled crowd—perhaps the hope of all hedonism forever. told. "You should have seen this man a month ago," Dr. Saginor says, watching his friend. "He couldn't move. He was in the bushes. And the minute she comes back, he'll be right back in the bushes. He runs like a whipped puppy whenever she crooks a finger or bats an eyelash." He refers, of course, to the missus.

Hef, at large: "Viagra was my birthday present. It's twue! It's twue! We had to do some serious lab tests at the Mansion! It's a recreational drug! It takes the pressure out of sexuality! The street name for it should be Pfizer's Riser."

She is a strong one, wily and wise, and she knows him all too well, knows him better than she knows herself in ways which isn't always the greatest thing for a marriage. He told me in our first conversation: 'I don't think I will ever love anyone again as I love her then and now." When I inform her of this, she says: "*Really*? You're kidding! Did he tell you that?" Her shock seems to mix validation and insecurity, as though she does not believe in herself enough to entirely believe him. Still, she is a woman who walked into a notorious lifestyle not of her own design and reordered it. She remade a pleasure dome into a functional family dwelling. In the Mansion's butler pantry, there continues to hang a small placard that gentally intimidates all staff—WHEN MOMMA AIN'T HAPPY, AIN'T NOBODY HAPPY. By all accounts, it was a battle—the rank and file were accustomed only to the unchanging whim of Big Daddy—but she mostly prevailed through sheer will and, some say, political maneuver before she abandoned the project. To find her, one must still call the Mansion, where the butlers expeditiously put her on the line, connecting to the House Next Door—as it is known with some small degree of fear.

The estranged Mrs. Hefner can be as warm and as chill as her translucent sapphire eyes portend. For instance, I first take an empathy tack and allow as to how life has probably gotten more difficult lately. "It has?" she says. 'For who? For you? Are you asking me questions or are you assuming or are you trying to get something out of me?" Then she laughs. Then she says she has no comment. And then she tells me everything. (All of our very friendly chats would begin this way.) But she knows exactly what she is doing, just as she knows everything her husband is doing, often before he does it—his nightlife revels in particular. (On the day of his Pre-Birthday Party, she blithely warned me, 'Oh, you'll see a lot of the *old style* there. Listen, stay outta trouble, okay?") For his part, Hef tends to keep her honorably apprised of his outings. He has told me: "There are no secrets. She asks me questions. I give her answers. But there are no secrets *anyway*! Everything I do, she knows! I don't know how she knows, but she knows."

Most certainly, there is perceptiveness and credence in her version of events the essence of which deserves to be presented. Thus, a random sampling: "Our interests, I would say, are still very similar. But it was the *same thing* every night for ten years. Sometimes I wanted for us not to have plans. Once in a while it would've been nice for him to say, 'Let's just call and tell everyone not to come on Friday night and have a quiet dinner together and go to a piano bar or something.' But it was always, 'Well, I can do that after the movie.' It wasn't that he didn't want to go out. It was that I wanted to go to bed at a reasonable hour. The truth of it became how I fit into *his* life. And I was lonely. But I don't want to sound like Poor Me. Because it wasn't Poor Me. I was having a nice time. I was twenty-four when I met him, and, it may be unfair to say, but it's like Lady Di. She also married young to a famous man set in his ways. You think or hope at least that you can change him. But sometimes it's impossible. You know, he's reliving his youth, and I think that's a good thing. What's wonderful is that we have remained friends. He's a good boy, and I'm not his baby sitter and I love him. He goes out on these dates, or whatever, with eighteen-year-old girls, then he comes home and he calls me, or I see him later. And he tells me, 'The whole time I'm with them, all I could hear was *blahblahblah*. All I could think of was you.' You know what? I'm not ready to date. I could date if I want. I have been asked out by some very nice men. But I'm happy with my boys. They're all the men I need."

Anger is there, certainly. It is one inch below the gloss of rationale and benevolence. It is understandable. She married and subdued a Legendary Life that, nevertheless, needed to retain its odd quirks of routine as well as its fundamental history. He is who he is, and his past cannot go away, because it keeps coming up, as in the two-hour A&E *Biography* which did not pretend that there [*continued on page 140*]



Woman We Love

Above All Other Women We Love This Year

Because, well, not because of her looks or that Oscar statue, though that ain't bad. But because she's smart and because she's funny and decent and because she's a passable sword fighter, and you can't really ask for any more than that, can you?

And there are more becauses where those came from.

BY TED ALLEN

Because in Helen Hunt's house, there hes a nineteenth-century hooked rug that memorializes two donkeys—names of Jack and Pete—that somebody once truly adored and perhaps depended upon for his livelihood, and these faithful asses cavort beneath a glorious, starry sky, and this simple possession causes her mirth. "The idea that someone spent the time to make a hooked rug about their donkeys is so fucking ridiculous," Hunt hoots. "It makes me laugh every time I look at it."

Because she is a woman who, now and then, hoots.

Because she is sexy and brave and vulnerable. "I'm very moved by a kind word and very wounded by an unkind, un-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT ERDMANN

thoughtful word " she says (We really sincerely *do* love you, Helen) Because the Academy's recent induction of her as a made woman has not gone to her head, and she must remind herself that some people might find her fearsome, might accord her a distracting and irritating amount of deference—which is to say she doesn't get off on the idea of being powerful Because she is a dog—not a cat—person, although her Johnny is a Samoyed and is thus too white and fluffy to be useful Because she's a passable sword fighter

Because, at the age of thirteen, she was arrested for shoplifting a leotard—at least, so it is alleged on one of the many Hunt Web sites—although a felony heist would have been better "I refuse to comment—don t have a lawyer present," she says, although she readily admits that her girlhood was largely about tights, which pretty much go hand in hand with leotards, don t they? "There were tights to go to school in and tights to take ballet in, and I was always growing, so the crotch of the tights was always somewhere around my knees," Hunt recalls Because, despite her allegedly sticky fingers she managed to be a child actor without turning into Drew Barrymore "I was sort of the slightly less bad girl in a group of bad girls," she says

Because, at thirty five, the slightly less bad girl from Culver City, California, is making some pretty good coin—reportedly $1 million per episode for *Mad About You*—although she's labored in the celluloid trenches since she was nine years old to get there Because, like her character in *As Good As It Gets*, she has cared for sick people, and she likes movies that wrench your insides the way real life does "Life blindsides you," she says "Jim [Brooks's] movies do that you're giggling along, and suddenly Debra Winger's character has cancer"

Because when asked to name women she loves, the first one that comes to mind runs a center for throwaway kids

A woman she loves Carol Guscott single mother of a teenage son, former owner of a small business in Jamaica Her life was torn apart three years ago when two dirt balls broke in and splattered her with battery acid, blinding her and burning off her face Since then, she's made her way to Los Angeles for reconstructive work Hunt's mom saw a blurb on the news she and Helen started going to the hospital with Guscott and became friends with her Hunt wishes you to know that you can send money to Guscott via the Carol Guscott Relief Fund care of the Fullerton Lions Breakfast Club, P O Box 3637 Fullerton, California 92834, and that donations are tax deductible "She really needs the money"

She has been in good movies and in bad movies and in TV movies and in big-screen movies, and here is the thing about Helen Hunt. She commits herself obsessively to roles, no matter how ridiculous the character, no matter how lame the filmed entertainment The scuzzy, teen seducing husband killer Pamela Smart Classical violinist in the execrable Swayze fest *Next of Kin* Girl quarterback on a high school football team "You just didn't pick and choose, you acted in what came along," Hunt says about much of her career Also in the good stuff, of course the philandering aide in *The Waterdance* Kathleen Turner's daughter in Coppola's *Peggy Sue Got Married*, her gentle, then searing Oscar turn opposite Jack Nicholson in *As Good As It Gets*. And the in between stuff *Twister* in which she passionately costars with Bill Paxton and, well wind That's the thing about her You don't catch her acting

Of Helen Hunt, others have written that she is beloved because she is the nicest person alive ("One of us!"), or because she's so beguilingly mysterious and elusive, or because she pilots a Volvo instead of a Porsche But, particularly they've called her pretty but attainable, the latter of which, besides being faint praise, is wrong. She's a babe. You best be damn self-actualized if you imagine yourself attaining much more than what Hunt calls her 'fuck-you wave'—the peekaboo signal she presents to people who insist on staring at her in restaurants, which, we all were raised well enough to know, one should not do

It would naturally be Nicholson who would put his finger on a more insightful reason for her lovability (she has one of the top ten Q ratings of all female entertainers), even though he was portraying a character and speaking this line not to Helen Hunt the person but to Carol the character Despite that, maybe there was a little part of Jack Nicholson that was talking to the actual Helen Hunt when he said "You make me want to be a better man " She makes you wish that you, however improbably—even more improbably than her *Mad About You* costar Paul Reiser, whose character married up and knows it—could deserve such an inspiration That you could make those gray green eyes crinkle That you could keep step with that wit That by virtue of the fact that so many Americans already have drawn someone so genuinely clever and edgy and cool to their moronic, fickle, star fucking bosoms, maybe we've already become a nation of better men

Keep wishing.

Allother woman she loves Cicely Berry a voice coach for the Royal Shakespeare Company Speaking of which, get Hunt started on Shakespeare, an abiding love that blossomed on childhood visits with her folks to Shakespeare in Central Park and Will 'Grandpa Walton' Geer's Theatricum Botanicum in Topanga Canyon She came to learn that Geer had a garden containing every flower ever mentioned in a Shakespeare play ' It was rumored," she says conspiratorially, "that he used to go out there naked in the middle of the night and garden "

For some reason it is difficult to believe that she dated Matthew Broderick—nothing personal, it just is But she did for two years after their bravura performance with a chimpanzee in *Project X*. She's now in the company of comic actor Hank Azaria late of *Godzilla* (along with Broderick—a couple of stand-up fellas huh?), who does the voices of Moe the bartender and Apu the convenience-store guy on *The Simpsons* and thus qualifies as a guy we really like Hunt, for her part, will not open this topic to discussion, which is at once frustrating and classy "It just feels wrong to bring something up that is the most precious thing in my life and use it as a way to promote myself " She calls Azaria "my boyfriend" or "my partner," but that sparkly thing on her ring finger had to come from somebody's two months' salary, and so you have to figure that she's a woman he loves enough to make honest And who wouldn't?

Because she refuses to kiss and tell Because she has that dimply smile, that faint nervousness balanced with fierce intelligence Because she has forgiven American men their inability or unwillingness to dance, even though she loves to do so herself (Hello, Hank, whaddya gonna do at the reception, make her lead?) Because she wishes to bring forth children soon Because she likes (and sometimes delivers) Tracy-and-Hepburn-style repartee in movies but in real life she says, "If what's coming into your mind is, 'You're pissing me off,' I'd rather hear that than some jab of a joke." Because she smells like soap

Because it drives her to distraction that someone might drib-



Because she refuses to kiss and tell. Because she has that dimply smile, that faint nervousness balanced with fierce intelligence Because she has forgiven American men their inability or unwillingness to dance, even though she loves to do so herself

ble coffee upon himself, causing her to disclose, "Every time it doesn't land on your white shirt a little part of me celebrates."

Because, when asked to tell a joke, she cannot think of one.

Because Jack Nicholson likes her. "The most remarkable thing about him is the lack of cynicism," she says. "He starts with the assumption that you know how to do what you do, that you'll be good at what you do, that you'll have a willing and open attitude about what you're doing, and if you don't, that would be a surprise to him."

He considers her 'a great gal, as we used to say.'

Because, because, because, because, because.

Because of the wonderful things she does. Like caring that a poor Jamaican woman got her face burned off.

Here's that first woman she loves: Liz Gomez runs the Los Angeles Youth Network, a shelter in Hollywood for runaway and throwaway kids. Hunt's friend Anthony Edwards of *ER* took Hunt there one Christmas to deliver presents. "They lost most of their facilities in the earthquake, but somehow the place is still open," Hunt says. "She just kept showing up every day."

New York. Hunt's in town for her sole thespian departure in 1998 from *Mad About You*. Nicholas Hytner's *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center, the role of Viola. (She read about the upcoming production in *The New York Times* and called her agent. "Can I be in it? I want to be in it!") Because Viola finds herself shipwrecked in a strange land. Hunt says she is reading Sebastian Junger's account of a disaster at sea, *The Perfect Storm*; she's also well into Dorothy Allison's novel *Cavedweller*. She's wearing black pants and a white V-neck and a diamond pendant and sandals. She pulls back the hair from her mile-high forehead over and over. She carries a black leather backpack, in which is a Discman in which is a Stevie Wonder disc.

Yes, because, again, because one cannot dislike someone who works out to Stevie's *Original Musiquarium I*.

Because when she consumes eggs she consumes three of them, hard poached, in this fashion. She tears off a little bite of English muffin and then smears it with strawberry jelly, and then trims off a bit of egg and balances it precariously on her knife, where it glistens and wiggles in all its jolly egginess as she conveys it carefully skyward and ups it onto the muffin bite, which she then pops into her lipstick-free mouth.

She talks of the upcoming season. "I'm pretty sure it's going to be the last year," she says. *Mad* ended this past annum with a successful bit featuring the suddenly available Ellen DeGeneres, who may become a regular, despite some unseemly wagging. "There was some fucking Liz Smith piece that said we didn't have fun," Hunt says, "and all three of us got on the phone with Liz Smith and said, 'Excuse me,' because it wasn't true."

Because she uses the *f* word a lot.

"Now," Hunt says, "we want to find an arc that will wrap us up."

Was there a part of her that wanted the network to tell her to walk? "Yes. Sure. There were times when I was like, Oh, God, let them decide."

And what of life, then, when the show is over?

"I really don't know who I'm going to be when the show is over. Maybe I can read ten books at once. I never said I'm going to do this [acting—she's talking here about acting!] for the rest of my life. I still don't feel that way, actually."

A couple of famous women she loves: Meryl Streep. "She has been for so long the quintessential American actress." Susan Sarandon, whose *Dead Man Walking* was Hunt's entertainment selection for this past New Year's Eve. "What kind of lunatic does that?" she says of choosing the movie, which is hardly your cork popping, seventy-six-trombones kind of fare. "We stopped the tape at midnight and went, 'Uh, happy New Year.'"

Helen Hunt is sitting in a public place, facing away from the crowd. This works for an hour. Then a woman walks by, glimpses, stares, leaves, thanks of a reason to walk by again, stares. Hunt gives her the peekaboo, the fuck-you wave, which isn't really so much a fuck you as a Hello, I'm eating here! 'Loitering." Hunt shrugs.

There are, you see, upsides and downsides to receiving an Oscar for best actress. "It got me a little more famous," she says. (That is actually what she says, and almost sadly. "It got me a little more famous.") This means more people run past her on the sidewalk, then turn around, pretending to look for someone who was not really behind them. "I kind of feel like a spy sometimes. My life is becoming a series of episodes where I wear disguises that make me look less attractive and don't work." But it—that golden statue—also means that she won't be making TV movies again anytime soon—or playing supporting roles to Swayze as he attempts to avenge the death of his hillbilly brother in a crossbow rampage through the mean streets of Chicago. Sorry to remind you of that.

"There's a Rilke poem—it's my favorite poem in the world—and he talks about 'I want to unfold / Let no place in me hold itself closed / for where I am closed, I am false.' I found I was sort of walking around clenched and folded and angry at being, at having my privacy invaded every five seconds. And I thought, You know what, shame on me, because I don't want to live a life of being tight and clenched, so I got to unclench and put up some more definite boundaries between me and people who don't get it. And at the same time, be a decent, openhearted person."

It's not as if she doesn't understand the fascination, though, because she feels it, too, and is willing to admit it, and that's why you really have to love her. At the suggestion that perhaps there ought to be a celebrities-only island somewhere she replies, "That's no good. Then I'd be running around going, 'Oh, my God, there's Bruce Springsteen!'"

A few more—she's got a lot of love to give: Judi Dench. Mare Winningham, Gena Rowlands, Gladys Knight. Bonnie Raitt, Joni Mitchell, Shawn Colvin, Kathleen Wilhoite, all the women in Hunt's family and all her friends juggling kids and careers. Also—last one—Anne Lamott, author of *Bird by Bird* and *Operating Instructions*. "Because her characters are messy and human and sometimes petty and sometimes generous and all these things. And you read them and you feel less alone in your messy, crappy humanity. Sort of."

You can imagine her curled up on a sun-drenched window seat somewhere sharing those characters' epiphanies, or drawing sharp little breaths in a dark theater as an actor unwittingly reveals to her truths that she'd somehow forgotten, and you know she inscribes these small wisdoms into little books with locks on them—and probably rereads them later. Because she's the kind of person who considers her life a project. Because the women she loves make her want to be a better woman. ■



women we love

Heather Graham, 28, actor

We could tell you that we love Heather Graham for her bizarre political activities (though we've never heard of any). We could tell you that we love her for donating hundreds of thousands of dollars to adult literacy programs (has she?). And we *would* love her for those things. Of course. We also love her because she played Rollergirl in *Boogie Nights*. Sweet Lord. Sure, she's been in Hollywood for a while—you've seen her in *Swingers*, *Two Girls and a Guy*, and *Drugstore Cowboy*—but *Rollergirl*? Talk about putting yourself out there. "Heather's confident enough in her own identity not to worry about the consequences of every role she takes," says her *Swingers* costar John Favreau. "She's an amazing paradox." (That, too.)

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT ERDMANN AT [illegible] RANCH IN THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA, MAY 22, 1998

Aimee Mullins can *move*. With athleticism determination—and a little help from her question mark-shaped, custom-built, carbon-fiber-epoxy resin Flex-Sprint III prosthetic legs ($10,000 per)—Aimee Mullins moves to the tune of one hundred meters in 15.77 seconds. She long jumps eleven feet four inches. She is the world record holder, double-amputee class, in the one-hundred-meter dash and the American record holder in the two hundred. As a member of the women's track team at Georgetown University, she was the only double amputee ever to have competed at Division I level. So are you impressed? *Moved*? Her college coach, Frank Gagliano, sure is. "After thirty-eight years of coaching," he says, "you need inspiration to keep you going—and Aimee was." Mullins was born with no fibula bones in her shins. When she was a year old, doctors amputated both legs just below the knee. She wore conventional prostheses until her junior year in college when she discovered the Flex-Sprint legs designed by Van Phillips, founder of Flex-Foot Inc. and an amputee runner himself. This May, she graduated at the top of her class from Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, and now she is in training for the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN HUET AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON, D.C., MAY 21, 1998



Aimee Mullins, 23, sprinter



Chamique Holdsclaw,
21, forward,
University of Tennessee

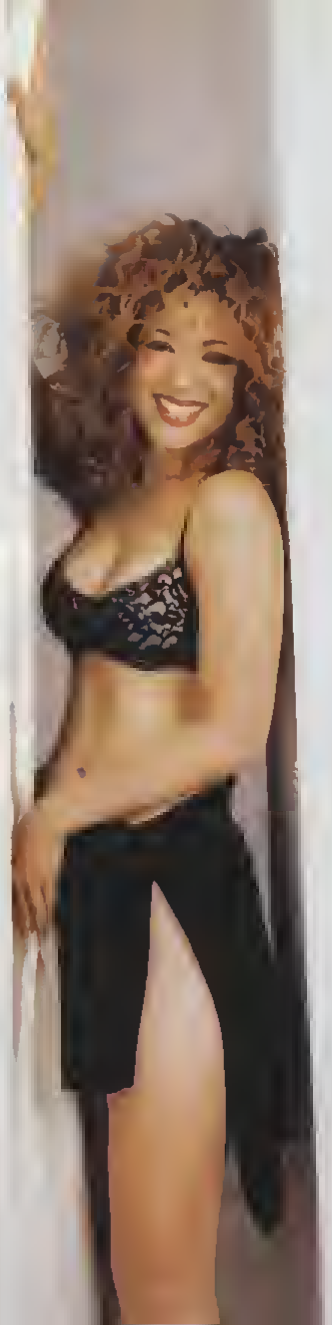
Every team on which Chamique Holdsclaw has played since she was in the eighth grade has won a championship. That's very not a coincidence. Entering the University of Tennessee, the Queens, New York, native has racked up more awards and honors than *Titanic*—two-time first team All-American, AP and Naismith Player of the Year, NCAA tournament MVP—and has accepted them all with grace and modesty

"Chamique Holdsclaw is, without a doubt, the most exciting women's basketball player ever."
—**Michael Jordan**

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANETTE AURELL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE IN KNOXVILLE, JANUARY 9 1998

Alex is sort of like a caterpillar. She's going through a metamorphosis—she's an extremely dynamic woman, but at times you can tell that she was once much more inhibited," says Eriq La Salle of his *ER* costar, the one with the head full of curls, the sexy English accent, and the *Masterpiece Theatre* pedigree. "It's a combination that's very appealing and attractive. Alex is no frills—the only thing frilly about her is her hair. And I love her for it. I've been acting for fifteen years, and I just have a *hoot* with her."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEPHEN SIGOLOFF AT SMASHBOX STUDIOS IN CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA, MAY 6 1998



Alex Kingston,
35, actor



THE FATTY SUIT

For my sister Amy, there's nothing more beautiful than a good old-fashioned skin disease, a set of false teeth, and a really big butt

BY DAVID SEDARIS

My father called me late one recent Sunday evening, excited with the news that my sister Amy was scheduled to appear in a magazine article on interesting New York women under the age of forty.

"Can you imagine?" he asked. "My God, put a camera in front of that girl and she'll shine like a diamond! Between the single men and the job opportunities, her phone is going to ring right off the hook!"

My father has always placed a great deal of importance on his daughters' physical beauty. It is to him, their greatest asset, and he monitors their appearance with an almost freakish intensity. Because it was always assumed that we would go to college, my brother and I were free to grow as plump and ugly as we liked. Men didn't need to improve themselves through marriage. They had other options. Our bodies were viewed as vehicles—pasty, potbellied machines operated by what science has revealed to be the tiniest of ratsin sized brains. I could wander freely through the house, drinking pancake batter from a plastic bucket, but the moment one of my sisters overspilled her bikini, my father was right there to mix his metaphors. "Jesus, Flossie, what are we running here, a dairy farm? Look at you, you're the size of a tank. Two more pounds and you won't be able to cross state lines without a trucking license."

In response to his fierce pressure, my sisters became increasingly moody and self-conscious, losing themselves, however briefly, to a variety of destructive habits. The one exception is Amy who, for as long as I can remember, has chosen to lose herself in others. It's something she began at an early age and has gone on to master as her own spooky art form. For Amy, school was dedicated solely to the study of her teachers. She meticulously charted the repetition of their shoes and blouses and was quick to pinpoint and imitate their mannerisms. Practicing alone in the basement, she would pace before her king-sized blackboard in full costume. Her imaginary classroom was a forum in which the teachers ignored the lesson plan, preferring instead to discuss their elaborate home lives, which most often involved a bedridden mother forced to take oxygen from a tank.

Amy turned that same eye on my parents' friends and neighbors. Choosing from her box full of wigs and cast-off dresses, she would prepare herself, a fake martini and sit at the rec-room bar, mastering their slurred inflections. She was great as Flo Wagner and Eleanor Kelliher, but her best impersonation was of Penny Midland, a stylish fifty-year-old woman who worked part-time at an art gallery my parents used to visit on a regular basis. Penny's voice was a wounded slosh, the words forced out of her mouth much like the stubborn leavings puddled at the bottom of a ketchup bottle.

Wearing a white pageboy wig and one of my mother's better caftans, Amy began calling my father at the office. "Lou Sedaris! Penny Midland here. How the hell are you?"

An awkward conversationalist, my dad would verbally fidget before saying, "Penny! Well... what do you... know. Gosh, it's good to hear your... voice."

The first few times she called, Amy discussed gallery business, but, little by little, she began complaining about her husband, a Westinghouse executive named Van. "I want out," she'd say. "It isn't that I don't care for him as a friend, but at this point in my life, I don't know that I can stay married to a man who... well, a man who likes boys. I don't know how else to say it. The man likes boys, and that's the way it is."

Our father offered comfort with standard, noncommittal phrases such as "I guess there's two sides to every coin" and "Tomorrow's another day, so you just hang in there."

"Oh, Lou. It just feels so good to talk to someone who understands."

I walked into the kitchen late one afternoon and came upon my twelve-year-old sister propositioning our father. "I was thinking that maybe you and I could get together sometime just for laughs, unless we felt like taking it to another level." Amy studied her reflection in the oven door, brushing her white bangs away from her forehead with her heavily jeweled fingers. "All I'm saying is that I find you to be a very attractive man. Is that a crime?"

This is what my mother meant when she accused people of playing a dangerous game. Had my father accepted Penny's offer, Amy would have known him as a philanderer and would have wondered whom else he had slept with. Everything he'd ever said would have been called into question and scanned for possible sexual content. Was that *really* a business trip, or had he snuck off to Myrtle Beach with Beverly Como or one of the Strivides twins? Who *was* this man?

It is to his credit that our father was such a gentleman. Stammering that he was very flattered to be asked, he let Penny down as gently as possible. He offered to set her up with some available bachelors from his office at IBM and told my sister to take care of herself. [*continued on page 138*]

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN VELENCHENKO

Esquire, in conjunction with Komar and Melamid, presents

America's Most Wanted Woman

women we love

. . . and we can prove it

Legend has it that sculptors in ancient Greece, in creating their three-dimensional representations of the human ideal, would borrow different features from average citizens—from, say, Nyssa, the perfect nose, from Chryseis, the perfect forehead, from Isodice, the perfect left shoulder, et cetera. The resulting amalgam, though drawn from ordinary people, would be perfect and complete, a paragon of the female homo erectus. The Greeks' methodology is the chief reason that we still hold their sculpture in such high regard, whereas that of, say, the Visigoths, who didn't know their heads from their asses, is sold at flea markets or used to pave roads.

In thinking of beauty in contemporary America, though, we have forsaken antiquity; we have forgotten the lessons of the Greeks. We have come to rely too heavily on the questionable whims of ascot-wearing fashion arbiters and the casting directors of *Baywatch*. What are we left with? A muddle, a cacophony of clashing voices, the rabble's confusion. What we need is an empirical approach, a scientific strategy, an elegant guiding philosophy. What we need is good, solid polling.

Only through polling could we hope to translate dreamy visions and fuzzy ideas into the clean, cold numbers that might yield our Platonic ideal—America's Most Wanted Woman. Thus we needed a statistical scientist, a pollster who, through pinpoint questioning and a careful sampling of American men, could trace the heart of a nation, plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The idea first came to us via renowned artists Komar and Melamid, who recently undertook a similar endeavor in *Painting by Numbers: Komar and Melamid's Scientific Guide to Art* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), which demonstrates that by using polling data, one can create a painting by consensus—the ultimate marriage of art and democracy.

Komar and Melamid's research reveals that what Americans want most in art is a large, blue landscape populated with a few animals, some water, and perhaps George Washington. But what does the late-twentieth-century American man want in a woman? (And, by the way, why is she so rarely his wife?)

The Poll

The polling was conducted by Audience Research & Analysis over a five-day period in late April. The ages of the respondents ranged from eighteen to sixty-eight, and although three fourths of them were college educated, they hailed from all over the nation—cities, suburbs, and rural areas—and represented various socioeconomic strata.

As for the questions asked, we left the wording to the professionals at AR&A. We did, however, stress the importance of specificity. We needed to know not only if men like their women to have nice ears but precisely *how big their earlobes should be*, not only the American man's preferred breast size but also the *preferred breast shape*. How to accomplish this? Careful phrasing. To wit:

It's hard to describe the ideal shape of a breast, but which of the following comes closest?

a. pancake shaped (broad and flat)
b. ski jump (gently sloping, with the nipple lifting at the end)
c. rounded (like a French champagne glass)
d. full (like half of a ripe melon)

Gives you gooseb umps, right? In this way, we asked about hair color, eye color, height, weight, the shape of a woman's face, the length of her legs, the length of her fingernails. Again, in the interest of precision, we often had to be extremely specific, as in the case of skin color. How to describe the many shades and hues? Here, vivid language was essential.

What color skin would your most desirable woman have?

a. pinkish-ivory
b. olive-beige
c. yellow-beige
d. bronze
e. mocha-brown
f. deep brown

Tricky stuff. Indeed, in the interest of delivering a more concrete idea of the sort of woman they favored, we gave respondents a short list of Hollywood's biggest stars:

In terms of the shape of their bodies only, which one of the following actresses comes closest to the form of your ideal woman?

a. Meg Ryan
b. Calista Flockhart
c. Demi Moore
d. Julia Roberts
e. Sharon Stone
f. Kim Basinger
g. Other

The result of that one will remain a secret until the next page; however, we will say that although Calista Flockhart, star of *Ally McBeal*, may rule Monday-night television, she does not rule the hearts of men. (She landed in last place, with 9 percent.)

Of course, we wanted to know not only about the Most Wanted Woman's precise physical attributes—though that was admittedly about 98 percent of it—but also in what setting the respondents picture their ideal mate:

In which of the following activities would you like to see your most-desired woman participate? Please answer yes or no to each one.

Yes	No		Yes	No	
[ ]	[ ]	physical workout	[ ]	[ ]	horseback riding
[ ]	[ ]	sunbathing	[ ]	[ ]	nature walks
[ ]	[ ]	attending concert or theater	[ ]	[ ]	in bed
[ ]	[ ]	dancing	[ ]	[ ]	other

ILLUSTRATIONS: KOMAR AND MELAMID

First, the Bad News

Before we present America's Most Wanted Woman, it is instructive to know what men do not like. For instance, we asked men about the size and shape of a woman's nose. Overwhelmingly, men favor a nose that is not huge and not extremely pointy. Thus . . .



America's Most Unwanted Nose*

*artists' rendering

We asked men about eyebrows. Contrary to conventional wisdom, men do not like large, bushy eyebrows. Nor are they particularly attracted to pencil-thin, plucked eyebrows. Instead, they like them *somewhere in between*.



America's Most Unwanted Eyebrows*

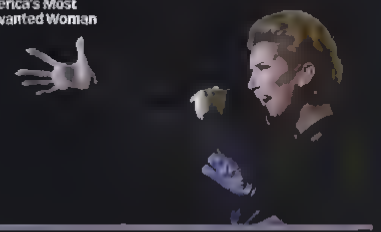
*not to scale

Opinions about hair were also somewhat surprising. Our sample does not like gray hair, it does not like exceptionally curly hair, and it does not like extremely short hair. (Leaving one to wonder: how to account for all the Gloria Stuart Web sites?)



America's Most Unwanted Hair

Finally, we asked a computer artist, working with the same methods employed by intelligence agencies, to use the data from the poll to create a digital rendering of America's Most Unwanted Woman. Admittedly, due to the limitations of the technology, the composite doesn't look quite human.



America's Most Unwanted Woman

That said, without further ado, we now give you the woman of your dreams (*buildup, et cetera*) ▶

America's Most Wanted Woman

allow us to introduce Ms. ... results of the Esquire Most ... will indicate met, above all ... most about what is known. ... all, "meanness." You do ... Davis (no tail), Kate Moss ... Monroe (too ... much). ... like say, ornamentals and a ... sampling, again and ... chose ... wanted hair not too straight but ... kis not too full but ... too thin, ... t too wide but not ... narrow. Wh... nt is the vanilla-flavored girl ... olive-beige skin

Personal style
Not too modern, not too traditional, more like a mid-century Jackie Kennedy
Medium (33%)

Shape of face
Not too round, not too long,
Medium (48%)

Hair length
Not too long, not too short
Medium (44%)

Hair color
Sandy-blond (30%)
(Brown a close second).

Color of eyes
Blue (41%)
(Last place: gray, 2%)

Eyelashes
Not too long, not too short
Medium (63%)

Earlobes
Not too small, not too long and lobey
Medium (37%)

Bone structure
Not too big, not too petite
Medium (43%)

Color of skin
Olive-beige (39%)

Shape of body vis-à-vis celebrities
Kim Basinger (26%)
(5.3% chose Other, who, we think, might have a sitcom on the WB.)

Breast size
Not too big, not too small,
C cup (42%)
(Not exactly medium, but still)

Breast shape
Ski jump (36%)
(French champagne ... close ... t 34% ...

Preferred activity
... registering approval; ... theater/concert: 88% ... 8% ... bed: 98% ... write-in votes "self ... provement seminars," "board games," "self ...," and "drinking heavily")

Size of rear end
Not too big, not too small
Medium (55%)

Size of hips
Not too wide, not too narrow
Medium (50%)

Calves
Not too muscular, not too thin
Medium (45%)

ALSO
Ideal height:
The 5 feet 7 inches and 5 feet 10 inches (15% each)
(Susan Anton, your moment has passed. Only 4% chose a woman over 5 foot 10.)

Ideal weight:
120 pounds (19%)

Ideal age:
Surprise! 30 years old (16%)
(Second place: 35, 17%)

CONCLUSIONS
There she is, the answer to your prayers—but also the catalyst for some provocative questions. For instance, what does the American man's taste for the median say about our idea of beauty? About women-take-all democracy applied to aesthetics? About consensus versus the extremes of beauty as portrayed by the fashion industry and popular culture generally?
We have no idea.

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women we love



She may not look the part, but Ashley Judd is a country girl. Her mother is Naomi and her sister is Wynonna, and [illegible] closely, you can still hear faint echoes of a Kentucky drawl that not even eight years in Hollywood can wash away. Which is a [illegible] as how she seems to have landed big role after big role—from parts in *A Time to Kill* to *Kiss the Girls* to her upcoming [illegible] *the Beholder*, with Ewan McGregor—while keeping her identity and her countrified elegance perfectly intact. "She is compl[illegible] of nonsense," says Morgan Freeman, who costarred with Judd in *Kiss the Girls*. "She is pure actor, top to bottom—dedica[illegible] her craft, the repository of an intimidating intellect, and all this housed in the body of Aphrodite."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PEGGY SIROTA IN LOS ANGELES, JUNE 2, 1998.



Julie Taymor,
45, director-designer

On th[illegible] off Off Broadw[illegible] revered as a particularly inventive director. It wasn't until Disney brought her to [illegible]mas Square to stage [illegible] Hilton Broadway version of *The Lion King*, however, that Taymor's gifts were unleashed for mass consumption. Using puppeteering skills she'd learned in Indonesia, Taymor took the conventions of the big musical and threw them to the lions—garnering six Tony awards in the process, including Best Director. "Julie's intensity drives people batty," says comic actor Bill Irwin. "And it's also the thing that makes her work incredible."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL WESTLAKE IN NEW YORK CITY, MAY 18, 1998



Garry Shandling (or was it Larry Sanders?) once declared, in the pages of this magazine, that men are funnier than women. Having worked extensively with Janeane Garofalo, he might, you'd think, have known better. Who could forget her pitch-perfect performance as Paula the talent booker on the *Larry Sanders Show*? Or the fact that she managed to be hilarious on *Saturday Night Live*? That alone is enough to make you fall in love. "Janeane is unique," says her friend and *Reality Bites* costar Ben Stiller. "I have no idea who her influences are—in terms of intelligence, maybe someone like Elaine May. But she has a vulnerable side that makes her much fuller than just an agenda. We'd love to do a romantic comedy with her."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEPHEN SIGOLOFF IN LOS ANGELES, MAY 23, 1998

Janeane Garofalo, 33,
actor, comedian



Stand
Heat
Peggy Lynn, 33,
Austin, 26,
from left
Kinley, 27,
Sharon Brown, 24,
Lynn, 33, **Shana**
Patrone, 25, **Anita**
Cochran, 31, **Chely**
Wright, 27, **Allison**
Moorer, 26

The Nashville Network. TNN. Those initials do not prepare you for women who look like these. Wholesome women in tight T-shirts and snug jeans, dancing, pouting, and rolling around in grassy fields in sheer dresses, some of whom can sing. And there they are in the middle of your cable universe. The new country girls. You'd think they'd change the name of the network to TNA. Hee haw!
PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT ERDMANN AT HARLINSDALE FARM IN FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE, MAY 18, 1998

ESQUIRE
STYLE

NOT YOUR TYPICAL BUSINESS SUIT

USED TO BE STRIPED OFFICE GETUPS WERE ALL THE SAME BORING
BUT THAT WAS USED TO BE THIS FALL,
SUITS FIND SOME COLOR FOR THEIR STRIPES WITHOUT LOSING BOARDROOM DIGNITY.
ESQUIRE PICKS THE BEST OF THEM

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL STEELE





EVERY GUY WHO GOES TO AN OFFICE HAS A STRIPED SUIT IN THE CLOSET. NOT EVERYONE HAS STRIPED SUITS LIKE THESE. WHICH IS EXACTLY WHY YOU SHOULD. THEIR COLORS—THOUGH SUBTLE—STAND OUT ENOUGH TO DISTANCE YOU FROM THE CROWD—ESPECIALLY IF YOUR SHIRT AND TIE CHOICES PICK UP THE STRIPES' COLOR. OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED THREE-PIECE WOOL SUIT WITH BEIGE CHALK STRIPES ($695) BY JOSEPH ABBOUD. CENTER: THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED THREE-PIECE CASHMERE-AND-WOOL-BLEND SUIT WITH MAROON CHALK STRIPES ($2,090) BY ETRO. RIGHT: THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED THREE-PIECE WOOL SUIT WITH LIGHT-BLUE PINSTRIPES ($1,620) BY VALENTINO. THIS PAGE: THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED WOOL SUIT WITH GREEN PINSTRIPES ($1,924) BY VERSACE



THIS SUIT ALTERNATES BETWEEN BLUE AND WHITE CHALK STRIPES AND THEREFORE LOOKS BEST WITH A SIMPLE SHIRT AND TIE COMBINATION—A WHITE FRENCH-CUFFED NUMBER AND A NAVY NECKTIE SAY. THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED THREE-PIECE WOOL SUIT WITH CHALK STRIPES ($4,106) BY BRIONI



THIS THREE BUTTON HAS A SIMILAR PATTERN TO ITS BROTHER'S AT LEFT BUT ALTERNATES THE STRIPE WIDTH, TOO—FROM CHALK TO PIN AND BACK TO CHALK. THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED WOOL-AND-CASHMERE-BLEND SUIT WITH ALTERNATING GRAY CHALK STRIPES AND WHITE PINSTRIPES ($1,100) BY BOSS HUGO BOSS.



WHEN A PINSTRIPE SUIT'S STRIPES ARE INTERRUPTED AND DON'T RUN IN A SOLID LINE, AS ON THIS NUMBER, IT'S CALLED A BEADED PINSTRIPE. THIS PARTICULAR SUIT ALSO HAS A SHADOW STRIPE RUNNING ALONGSIDE THE BEAD. THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED WOOL SUIT WITH RED BEADED STRIPES ($1,650) BY DOLCE & GABBANA.



UNLIKE WITH SOME OF THE SUITS ON THESE PAGES, SUBTLETY IS THE RAY TO THESE STRIPES. A GRAY PIN OVERLAYS A SOFT BROWN CHALK SIZED SHADOW STRIPE FOR A NICELY MUTED EFFECT. THREE BUTTON SINGLE BREASTED WOOL SUIT WITH GRAY PINSTRIPES OVER BROWN SHADOW STRIPES ($1,550) BY ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA.

PROP STYLING BY CASEY SPOONER

ENGLISH TAILORING (THE TICKET POCKET AND FLASHY LINING) THIS SUIT HAS, BUT THE STRIPE COLORS ARE ALL AMERICAN. RED, WHITE, AND BLUE. IT'S UNDENIABLY THE FLASHIEST OF THE LOT AND LOOKS BEST WITH A MONOCHROMATIC SHIRT AND TIE COMBO. THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED WOOL SUIT WITH RED, WHITE, AND BLUE PINSTRIPES ($1,350) BY TOMMY HILFIGER COLLECTION. FOR STORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE 143



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL [illegible]



the last boxing story

LOOK AT HIM. DON KING IS OLD NOW. OLD AND TIRED WORST OF ALL, WITH MIKE TYSON AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT [illegible] HIS FAITH IN [illegible] OF HIS FELLOW [illegible] BEING SOREL[illegible]

BY SCOTT RAAB

If I do anything worthwhile, a nigger did it. If I do something that's questionable, I ain't got to tell 'em a nigger did it—they'll say the nigger did it. If I can contribute any philosophy or attitude born of success, unanimity, friendship, and zeal, I want it to be "The nigger did it." This is what I want people to understand.
—Don King, 1988

THIS AIN'T BUCKWHEAT. A volcano made human, he's nearly seventy now, six and a half skinny-legged, broad-backed feet from the black tassels of his loafers to his silver-tipped skull nimbus, almost three hundred pounds pounding out the rustling, bullish stride of a man who will do whatever it takes, his smile a sunburst beneath chill executioner's eyes, his voice a Klaxon braying, *haw, haw, haw,* barking commands, quoting Kant, his boiler spilling out over his belt, a Brick City

Keynesian who parlayed the skills he mastered running numbers on the Cleveland streets into a global sports empire, a *baaaaad* ex-con Stagger Lee not merely capable of killing but who indeed *has* killed.

He did his time and kept his mouth shut, as they say, and if he didn't come out a new man—or even, way down, a profoundly changed man—he came out smarter, and he came out smiling. But he also came out as dark as he went in, and the bigger and less invisible he got, the blacker he seemed, until there was nothing left of him but a bull's-eye.

The IRS shot twenty-three bullets at him in 1985, tipped with four years of an FBI sting operation. King dodged each and every charge and then flew the jurors to ringside in England for a heavyweight-championship tilt.

Then the feds came after him in 1995 with their war room of one hundred thousand documents and his former accountant warbling like Callas to support nine counts of in-

THE PUNK WHO WOULD BE KING: FROM 1951 TO 1966, DON KING WAS ARRESTED THIRTY FIVE TIMES ON CHARGES RANGING FROM RUNNING RED LIGHTS TO MANSLAUGHTER



surance fraud. The jury hung, and King walked. Again.

Now in 1998, the same nine counts of defrauding *Lloyd's of London*, for God's sake, of a sum of $350,000. Strange, when you consider that Lloyd's itself took no action after King's 1994 indictment and continues to insure, at a tidy profit, King's promotions.

Coulda been a contender, Cholly. Coulda been one of the hall-of-fame brigands of our snake-oil culture, up there with Barnum, Trump, and Keating, instead of what he is, which is a *brother*. Cholly, facing the same nine fraud counts three years later in the same burled-mahogany room of the same federal courthouse. Nearly seventy now, and each count could send him back up the river for five years.

Don King can do the math, *okay?* He rises each time the jury comes or goes, stands and watches, reading them, raking them with the Smile. At court breaks, he heads for the only pay phone on the fifteenth floor, near the john. He has *badness* to conduct and is apparently uncomfortable using the cellular on enemy turf. At lunchtime, he heads to the eighth floor cafeteria to bow and cackle, greeting the ladies dishing up his chicken and rice, telling them how lovely they look today, and signing napkins for the maintenance men. Larger and larger he grows, until the strands of his flickering corona bend against the ceiling tiles and his *haw, haw, haw* fills the room, and the government suits bent over their lasagna freeze and recoil, hunkered in their plastic chairs, and it is not brotherhood that fills their eyes. It is poison.

OUTSIDE THE HOTEL PRESIDENTE INTERCONTINENTAL IN Mexico City, twenty-three million people cough the muddy air, humping the pall of their feet shy of a twelve-and-a-half-cent peso, next week will bring another million as a thousand more villages empty of their hungry young, and the peso they pinch will be worth a dime, and the sky over the barrios will thicken, floured with the lava of their sweat, and the smoke and soot will drench the sun and mountains, and the corrugated-tin stands along the boulevards will have fresh truckloads of flowers to peddle to the wealthy headed to their fine homes and rainbow gardens behind iron gates and electrified wire.

This is Don King's kind of town. Two days ago, on his way from the airport to the hotel, King stripped the Piaget from his wrist and gave it to a quartet of bandidos who had cut off his car with their own at a stoplight and emerged brandishing pistols. Some say the robbery was a stunt. Some say a police car sat across the street while the theft unfolded. Some say the watch was a $100,000 Rolex—a gift, some say, from Mike Tyson, whose lawsuit against King for allegedly bilking him of $100 million was reported this morning. Some say Don King does not travel without bodyguards, certainly not in Mexico City, where human life and the peso devalue simultaneously and hailing the wrong taxi is truly a matter of life and death.

"I don't care nothin' 'bout a watch," says Don King. "I *love* Mexico. I love the Mexican people." Resplendent, draped in white linen pants and a houndstooth jacket, beaming into the television lights, the silver tendrils of his sweating hair swirling like sunspot trails, he begins chanting, "*Vi-va Mehi-co!*" over and over until the crowd at the weigh-in in the ballroom of the hotel is shaking fists, hopping in place, and shouting in time with him.

His smile is free, rich, and beautiful, a whipped-cream crescent of promise boundless and warm. The smile of the promoter, yes, and of the confidence man, but this, in the opalescent teeth of that excellent smile, is neither here nor there neither praise nor slur. If the Don King who killed two men and did four years' hard time is the same rough beast who never meets a folk he fears to love, if he is nothing but a sham, a flatterer, what difference does that make in love's pursuit? He woos by contradiction, by the seduction of scorn.

A jailhouse Shakespeare. Marcus Aurelius in a long white Cadillac, what desperate, fearless genius it took—what *love*—to turn Don King into Don King. Yes, love. Even white America, loathing his visage, mocking his every utterance, he insists on loving, by spouting its millennia of received wisdom, by transforming its bottomless appetite for self-deception into wealth past counting and fame beyond belief. He understands that the manifest love of one's fellow man—sensing and filling his needs, telling him what, in his heart of hearts, he longs to hear—can pick trust's lock, close the sale of confidence, and wring faith from hope and money from the fish, no matter if you're Don King, Bill Clinton, or Jesus H. Christ.

AFTER THE WEIGH-IN, HE MAKES HIS WAY SLOWLY FROM THE ballroom, pausing for the locals seeking his autograph or a picture with him. His smile blinks on and off with their flashbulbs. Fifty feet shy of the elevators, he spots two Mexican news crews waiting for him.

"Heh, heh, heh," King chuckles to himself, revving up. The Smile clicks on.

"Tyson knew everything that went on," he begins, as one skinny anchorman's halting English runs out before the end of his question. "He knew every piece of paper that he signed. He knows the truth. Mike Tyson is being manipulated by people who have a very different agenda than Mike Tyson or myself. I'm very hurt and very saddened that he would allow himself to become a pawn to be used in an assault against me, and anybody that's rational, rational and reasonable, can see that this is just a scheme, a disguise, to try to in *flu* ence my jury coming up on my retrial for the fraud case."

That is one breath. The reporter looks stunned—like a hound sent to flush a lox who suddenly finds himself nose to nose with a bear. Far down the line of restaurants and shops, not too distant for cheap irony, a pianist begins tinkling "My Way." The second camera crew has set up and turned on its lights and sound. King backtracks, sensitive to their needs.

"I really feel sorry for Mike Tyson. I'm deeply hurt. I'm very hurt. I'm very disappointed, because of the time, the energy the love, the *ded* ication and com-*mu*-ment to a man that's been through so much trauma and tribulation."

By now, a crowd of onlookers has gathered, and as King's cadences rise and fall, so do their faces. "My Way" has ended, but he's just begun to hit his notes.

"I'm still there, steadfast. Like a tree planted beside the river, *I will not be moved.* To be betrayed by him is like a *dagger* in the heart. But I've *dealt* with adversity and I will *continue* to deal with adversity, and I will *keep* my faith with the American people." His right fist, clenched, pumps the air.

HE IS A JAIL-HOUSE SHAKE-SPEARE, MARCUS AURELIUS IN A LONG, WHITE CADILLAC. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT THE LOVE OF ONE'S FELLOW MAN, TELLING HIM WHAT HE LONGS TO HEAR, CAN CLOSE THE SALE OF CONFIDENCE, NO MATTER IF YOU'RE DON KING, BILL CLINTON OR JESUS H CHRIST

"When I do my retrial, upon my vindication, then *Tyson* and all his newfound *agents* and friends"—he crescendos here but not in anger, he is smiling, joyous, in full roar—"they can *come on with it. I'll be ready for 'em.*"

The first crew shuts down and packs up, but the cameras of the second are still rolling.

"William Cullen Bryant said, 'The truth, crushed to earth, will rise again.' Thomas Carlyle said, 'No lie can live forever.' The *arc* of the moral *u*-niverse bends toward justice. Don King is a *child of God.* I've come this far by faith, by leaning on the Lord and trusting in His holy word, and He's *never* failed me yet. So I will continue in that faith, to seek Him as my refuge and my fortress. He said He'd prepare a *table* for me in the presence of my enemies, He would make my enemies my *footstool*, this He has done. And so Don King will be around *because God wants him around.*"

King is finished, somewhere in heaven Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—no relation—is hugging Casey Stengel. The second reporter somehow has no questions; he offers King his hand instead.

"Thank you, Señor King," he says.

"Thank *you* so very much," says Don King.

With the crowd gone and the lights off, sagging into a chair outside the hotel bar, King seems old and tired. One spindly ankle across his knee, his ivory shirt bloused over his waistline, he tilts back his massive head and sighs.

"I can't take no more," he mutters. His face is a flattened gray, as if the bulb of his brain has dimmed. He asks for water. There are no bodyguards around him, only Isadore, a portly round-eyed young fellow in a plastic sweat suit, who fishes a small bottle of Poland Spring from the black leather satchel in his hand. His other hand holds King's unlit cigar.

I have seen that spindly ankle before, caramel against the sheer black silk of his sock. In my salesman days in Cleveland Heights, at a shoe store on the corner of Cedar and Lee in 1972, I fetched him a size-12 pair of black gator-skin half boots—sixty-five dollars, a chunk of money then. He does not recall this now, of course, and his look is wary, not loving. No lights, no cameras. A buffer zone, a no man's land, created, in the absence of the Smile, by eyes so large and cold they seem like holes.

I mention Leo's Casino, a long gone R&B club on Euclid Avenue.

"Is Leo still alive?" King asks.

I have no idea. I don't even know if there ever was a Leo. I never set foot inside the club. Don King gleans all this in far less time than it takes to read these words.

"So very nice to meet you," he says. His outthrust fingers are slender, well manicured, almost dainty. Before I leave, I share my little joke. A story in this morning's *Mexico City Times* reported that the bandidos brought King's watch to their fence, who told them that it was a knockoff. They, too, have filed suit against Don King.

His *haw haw haw* spreads upward into the ether. He is actually slapping his knee as I walk away, feeling like a champion.

IF IT IS AS GOOD A JOKE AS DON KING SEEMS TO THINK, THAT IS because no one has been able to count accurately the number of his legal entanglements. They began as a rap sheet in his youth, an indifferent student from a family not so much brutally poor as rudderless—King's father died in the steel mills when Don was ten—he'd made a local name for himself in the policy rackets by his early twenties, running numbers in the Cleveland ghettos for the dagos. In 1954, King killed a Detroit thug during an attempted robbery of one of his gambling houses, the Cuyahoga County prosecutor ruled the shooting a justifiable homicide.

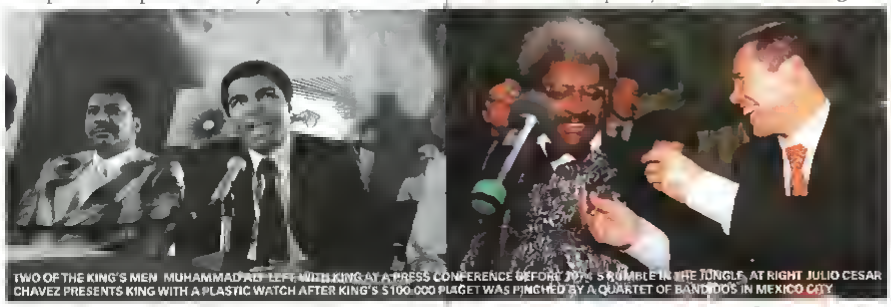
By the mid-1960s, King had a home in Shaker Heights, Ohio, a hot blues club down on Cedar Road and the law in his pocket. On April 20, 1966, in a bar he bumped into Sam Garrett, another policy man who owed King money—$600—and they had words. They took it out into the street, where King, a hundred pounds heavier, beat Garrett to the ground and stomped him dead. Convicted of second-degree murder by a jury, King faced a life sentence—until the judge somehow was persuaded, after a private meeting with King's lawyer, to reduce the crime to manslaughter.

He was sprung in 1971, forty years old, armed with the veneer of his jailhouse scholarship, the contacts he still had on the outside, and a burning desire never to return to jail, no matter what. By 1974, he had it all down, the trademark hair and the only-in-America shtick, the let-a-brother-help-a-brother pitch that everyone from Ali and the Fruit of Islam to Tyson and his Brownsville homeys found irresistible, the vision of a pay-per-view world in which the circus could visit the Romans wherever they dwelt, and, above all, the requisite heartlessness to plunge the shiv of love into anyone's back while keeping his own obsidian ass covered.

So what if he didn't swap his prison number for software code or Wall Street stock? King took the shot he had. A musician friend who knew Muhammad Ali put Don King on the phone with him, and King convinced Ali to come to Cleveland and box an exhibition to raise money for a failing hospital. That was 1972. Two years later, with Ali's and George Foreman's names on a contract and $10 million of other people's money on the line, King staged a heavyweight championship fight in Zaire and changed the face of a sport as primal and as lawless, as skanky and as despotic, as simple and as convoluted, as great sex.

He changed its *face*, he didn't pretty up the fight game's cutthroat soul or hide the perfect fit of his résumé to boxing's century-old hemorrhage of honor and blood, its history of race riots, apartheid de facto and de jure, mob muscle, fixes, and dead-end Senate investigations. It's simply his bad karma—or plain coincidence—that the Golden Age of Boxiana lasted only as long as Jack Dempsey refused to fight Negroes, as long as pale shadows named Frankie Carbo and James Norris and Blinky Palermo chose who would win and who could manage them, as long as only whites looted and discarded the punchy brutes.

Then Don King came along and spoiled the sport.



TWO OF THE KING'S MEN: MUHAMMAD ALI (LEFT) WITH KING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE BEFORE ALI'S RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE. AT RIGHT: JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ PRESENTS KING WITH A PLASTIC WATCH AFTER KING'S $100,000 PLAQUE WAS PINCHED BY A QUARTET OF BANDIDOS IN MEXICO CITY.

THE PLAZA DE TOROS IS A BULLFIGHT ARENA, A CIRCLE OF crumbling stone seating fifty thousand, ringed outside with soldiers, due primarily to the fact that tonight's main event stars Julio Cesar Chavez, a working-class warrior whose speed and power have eroded with time and hard use. Victor in 100 of 103 bouts, he has held six world-championship belts in three weight classes, and his godly status in this cauldron of Aztec, Mayan, and Spanish blood remains undiminished.

Chavez refers publicly to King as "my father," testament to the love that blooms when greed beds down with money. Everybody knows Don King is boxing's Satan, devourer of the clay-baked cretins who swap their blood for bread, exploiter of the thirsty ghouls who pay to cheer them on, creator of the chaos that rules the game. Everybody knows this, especially those who know nothing more and who have watched a prizefight only from an easy chair, who think the sport was born when they awoke to it. But Julio Cesar Chavez, who turned pro eighteen years ago at the age of seventeen and has earned nearly $50 million in purses under Don King's aegis, is not so clear-eyed or so smart.

The love that King and Chavez share is not wholly blind, of course. Chavez will come to New York and serve as a witness for the prosecution in King's retrial as he did in 1995. The alleged swindle hinges on $350,000 King collected from Lloyd's of London in 1991 on a fight canceled due to injury—a severe cut suffered by Chavez while training. But tonight, beneath the wink of a half moon climbing above the coliseum rim, as fifty thousand drunken Mexicans begin to howl and whistle, millions more dollars' worth of love is waiting to be made.

I have heard once before the sound the crowd makes when Chavez is introduced—on the beach in Orleans, Massachusetts, as a hurricane hit. I felt safer then. There are no soldiers inside the stadium, only the cowering Mexican police, no crowd control to clear the clogged aisles, nowhere to go and no way to get there if there were. On the tarp-covered dirt floor, the privileged sit thigh to thigh on folding tin chairs set in concentric circles around the ring and serve as range finders for the besotted cheap-seat campesinos in the steep bleachers who, weary of punching and kicking one another in the teeth, are now expressing their displeasure by hurling bottles, souvenir seat cushions, and ice. Into the ring. During the fight.

They aim for the police, the referee, their godling's opponent, but the true source of their rage is Chavez himself—and his caution. He used to sap a man with body blows that fell like tombstones until his target's arms and hands dropped—by the middle rounds, *always*—exposing the head to Chavez's stuttering, lethal combinations. But the skin of Chavez's face, taut with age and tanned by leather, can no longer withstand the cost of working inside an opponent's range. So he stays back, then lunges in and throws a punch or two, loading each for the knockout he knows will never come.

By the end, Chavez's face is a crimson smear. The trio of judges awards a draw. I am not surprised by their decision, nor by the foresight of those in the bleachers not yet numbed by *cerveza* or the blows of their neighbors, who have hoarded a sufficiency of ammo to loose one last volley upon us.

Least of all am I surprised by Don King's sudden materialization in the center of the ring after the decision is announced. Afloat in the midst of the flying debris, his hair alive in the light, his tuxedo and the smile unsullied, he is placid in his joy. The full house has been counted, better still, the draw will let Chavez, soaked in his own blood, eke out another multimillion-dollar payday. Or two. For glory, for Mexico, and, of course, for Don King.

It is a very grave matter to be forced to imitate a people for whom you know—which is the price of your performance and survival—you do not exist. It is hard to imitate a people whose existence appears mainly to be made tolerable by their bottomless gratitude that they are not. Thank heaven you. One is confronted with a chasm."

—James Baldwin, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*

A MONTH LATER, IN COURTROOM 15 D OF THE UNITED STATES Courthouse in lower Manhattan, Don King sits silent at the defense table in his jet-black funeral suit, starched white shirt, and brightly flowered tie, slowly clasping and unclasping his hands. When the jury rises for a break, filing out of the jury box, King stands, too, rocking gently from the shoulders, his suit jacket open, an American flag pin stuck on his lapel, those long-fingered hands clenched below the swell of his stomach, facing them. He positively beams, the smile an open hand of friendship, while his eyes take hard measure of each face, passing one by one.

A yard away, the jurors do not meet his eyes. It is not only the discomfort of sitting in judgment that turns them away, not just the glaring fame of Don King's face topped by his notorious frizz. That smile has too much calibrated heat, those calculating eyes too little warmth. No lights, no mike, no cameras, stripped of speech. The smile widens slowly, even as the jurors avoid him. It desperately seeks purchase, just one face, one nod, like an old hooker who knows she will not be chosen and still must trot it out.

These are not good days to be Don King. The jurors are not buying. Instead, day after day, they steal what meaning they can from his face as he speaks with his lawyers or listens to a witness. When he catches them, he turns and smiles, they look away. Eight of them are black, six of those are women. Once, I see him wink at the juror at the end of the first row, grinning despite herself; she turns her eyes.

They will not even hear his voice this time around, he testified in 1995 against the advice of his attorney, Peter Fleming Jr. The case, the same case, all documents, numbers, and jargon, had unraveled then to the point that the judge himself wondered aloud if a crime had actually been committed. But Fleming, a lanky, snow-haired baritone, pure patrician—Princeton '51, Yale Law '58, sprung Nixon henchman John Mitchell on obstruction and perjury charges in 1974, served as Senate-appointed special independent counsel in 1992 to plumb the Anita Hill leaks—couldn't still King's tongue. Three days of his self-contradictory testimony so befuddled the jury that, after a mere five hours of deliberation, it was hopelessly deadlocked. U.S. District Judge Lawrence McKenna—a cautious not to say plodding, George Bush appointee—promptly declared a mistrial.

This time, Fleming has a partner: William H. Murphy Jr.—Billy Murphy—a tightly wired, latte-tan peacock with an engineering degree from MIT, a long history of political activism (in 1983, he quit a circuit court judgeship to make a losing run for mayor of Baltimore), an array of taffy soft, custom-cut suits and a short, sassy ponytail.

Don King on the stand?

"Ain't gonna happen," snaps Murphy. "No motherfuckin' way."

But the government has his testimony from last time, it's going to read it to the jury.

"Fuck 'em. The man's being framed, and the jury's gonna see that."

King doesn't answer questions anyway—not from the stand and not from me. In full, he doesn't work that way. He wants only to preach justice and fair play, to bend the words of Thomas Jefferson: "Never trust the government", and Lord Acton: "Absolute power corrupts absolutely." He wants to hold us close and have us sway with him in the icy crevice between the American ideal of justice and its ugly reality. He wants us to know that without his passionate embrace of that ideal and his sorrowful grasp of this reality the Don King we judge could not exist.

In the elevator one day, I ask King if he sees a future for himself as a fight promoter beyond this case, beyond the Tyson suit. Every record—richest purse, largest live gate, biggest pay-per-view audience—is his. In 1994 alone, he staged *forty-seven* world title bouts. What's left to do, much less to prove?

"Read this," he says before the question is fully out of my mouth, and thrusts a folded newspaper into my hands. It is open to a column under Don King's byline: ONLY IN AMERICA, reads the headline, followed by the same riff of patriotic goo he's been spouting for twenty-five years. Don King wants to make his nation whole: he wants America to live up to its creed: hard work and fair play.

Does Don King actually believe this stuff?

"I have *lived* it," he says. "No one never hears me say a bad word about my country. My *government*—that's something else. You *see* what they tryin' to do to me? You *see*

what I'm up against?

His voice is full of hurt—sincere or conjured. I don't know. He is an actor, not an ironist. I do know that the elevator door is open, and he hasn't even acknowledged my question. "I need that," King says, taking the paper from my hands and stepping neatly out the door.

This is how King works. Ask him if it's true that he bought the steel mill where his father died and had it burned to the ground. "Heh, heh, heh," he says. Ask him how he keeps his spirits up and he stares at you as if you were born that morning. Ask him what he thinks when U.S. Assistant District Attorney Baruch Weiss tells the jury he's a liar and a phony and he says, "How is your lovely wife?" Ask him what he would like the American people to know about him. "The truth," he says. "The truth shall make you free."

That genius of a smile—it does not lie. It promises. It vows to fill whatever need those eyes have seen to father men children like Mike Tyson and Chavez, to deliver one last pouch of gold to Ali, to vouch a confidence to the earnest, doting writer, to proclaim innocence to a jury of his peers.

The smile is free. The promise has a price, beginning with belief.

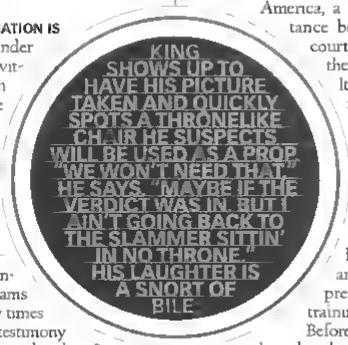
What does Don King need?

To be believed.

What does Don King believe?

Whatever it takes.

BILLY MURPHY'S FIRST CROSS-EXAMINATION IS of a wee balding British insurance underwriter, Dominic Adams, the sole witness associated with Lloyd's of London—Adams is no longer with the firm—to accept the government's all expenses-paid invite to fly to New York City and testify against King. Since he's due back in England tomorrow morning for surgery, his testimony is being videotaped.



Adams's memory is fine as Baruch Weiss leads him through the seven-year-old details. Better than fine, it is uncanny—until Murphy strikes and Adams can't even recall accurately how many times he met with Weiss to discuss his testimony in the case. Two? Three? What were the dates? What documents was he shown to refresh his recall? Who paid for his meals?

"Mr. Murphy . . ." Adams pleads repeatedly from the stand.

"Just answer my question," Murphy replies, cutting him off. His voice has the scorched-earth whine of an incoming howitzer, his copper-framed half lenses perch on the tip of his puggish nose, his pocket square points 90 degrees north.

Adams, wincing, looks beseechingly at Judge McKenna.

"You must answer," prompts the judge.

After ninety minutes of this, Adams is floating limbless in red water. His suitcases are in the judge's chambers, packed for home. As he wobbles to his feet and leaves the witness stand, Don King stands at the defense table and walks toward him.

Adams's eyes grow big as he sees King waiting for him halfway down the aisle. "Thank you, Mr. Adams," booms King, smiling at him, clasping the insurance man's small hand in both of his. "Thank you for your time and trouble. Have a safe flight back to England and, more importantly—most importantly—a successful operation."

"Thank *you*, Mr. King," says Adams, beaming back. "Thank you *so* very much."

No one else is here to witness this vignette. Don King and Dominic Adams have never met, will never meet again.

IN THE ROW BEHIND KING, TWO BEARDED AND YARMULKED rabbis from Crown Heights daven for him nearly every day. Their pity has been watered with King's $100,000 gift, but he has marched with them, too, arm in arm for peace. Stooped and wizened fight men—boxers, trainers, managers—stop by each day to pay respect. Al Sharpton comes, and Kweisi Mfume, poets, activists, Muslims.

Henrietta, his wife of nearly forty years, is here—small, light skinned and silver haired, chic in an olive cable-knit sweater and French manicure. Joseph Lowery, ancient lion of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, flies up from Atlanta, arriving after that morning's session has begun. Don King, sitting between Murphy and Fleming, turns and sees him seated two rows back.

"Sit in the front row, brother," Don King says, and smiles—not the blinding confidence man smile but smaller, sad eyed and openhearted, a smile that contains all the wisdom and want of nearly seventy years lived black in white America, a smile that knows precisely the distance between the bullfight ring and this courthouse, between the penitentiary and the penthouse, between ideal and reality. It is exactly as thick as a bankroll, as thin as a sheath of flesh.

He smiles for Lowery's sake, and for his own, and for the jury's.

SURELY A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITted. Julio Cesar Chavez arrives in his finest suit, a gray green windowpane with his hair parted neatly in the center and his face still pink and puffy to testify through an interpreter that he received only $80,000 in training expenses in 1991, not $350,000.

Before he enters the courtroom, Chavez clears his throat and spits on the marble floor. He and King do not look at each other, although King shakes with rueful laughter as Chavez struggles with Peter Fleming's cross-examination. Over the last fifteen years, the boxer has had no difficulty borrowing—in English—millions of dollars of King's money.

Ask me better questions, says a surly Chavez. I want to tell the truth.

After lunch, after conferring with his own attorney, Chavez's mood brightens, but his memory has grown dim. I don't remember, he answers. It was a long time ago. *Muchos años.*

King looks the other way as Chavez leaves the stand. "I don't want to see that son of a bitch," he will say later.

In between the testimony of Chavez and Joseph Maffia, King's former accountant, the jury watches, day after day, a videotape of British insurance men being grilled on two large televisions wheeled up to the jury box. Soon, the soporific combination of the televisions' drone and hum have zonked three jurors into a visible sleep. A fourth sits with her head down, thumbs to temples. Another, drifting, gazes with prenap eyes toward the defense table, where Peter Fleming's hoary head slowly tilts backward until it's facing the ceiling. On the bench, Judge McKenna's chin is cradled in one fist. Don King, however, is fully alert, following each word of testimony on the small screen at the defense table. Don King Productions paid the IRS $30 million last year, these are his tax dollars at work.

"I HAVE NO DOG IN THIS HUNT. NO brief to file. I know a little about insurance, more about the rackets of law and boxing, and I can't help believing that, by the letter of the law and in the serpentine spirit of the fight game, a grift has indeed touched the pockets of these Brit insurance brokers.

Big Fucking Deal.

I also trust my eyes and ears. Given the prosecution's piecemeal case, the whipsaw of Fleming and Murphy, and a jury grown edgy by week two and somnolent shortly thereafter, with God knows how many weeks to go, Don King will be set free to be harassed by the government until he dies.

But I don't know what I don't know, and, as Bird once said, if you don't live it, it won't come out your horn. I ain't black. I don't *know* Don King. I know that talking with him is like playing three-card monte with Shiva—*his* deck, *his* cards, *his* table, *his* many arms. Smothering questions in his gravy of bombast and *Bartlett's*, bobbing, weaving, and clinching, he keeps moving his mouth until you've forgotten what you wanted to know.

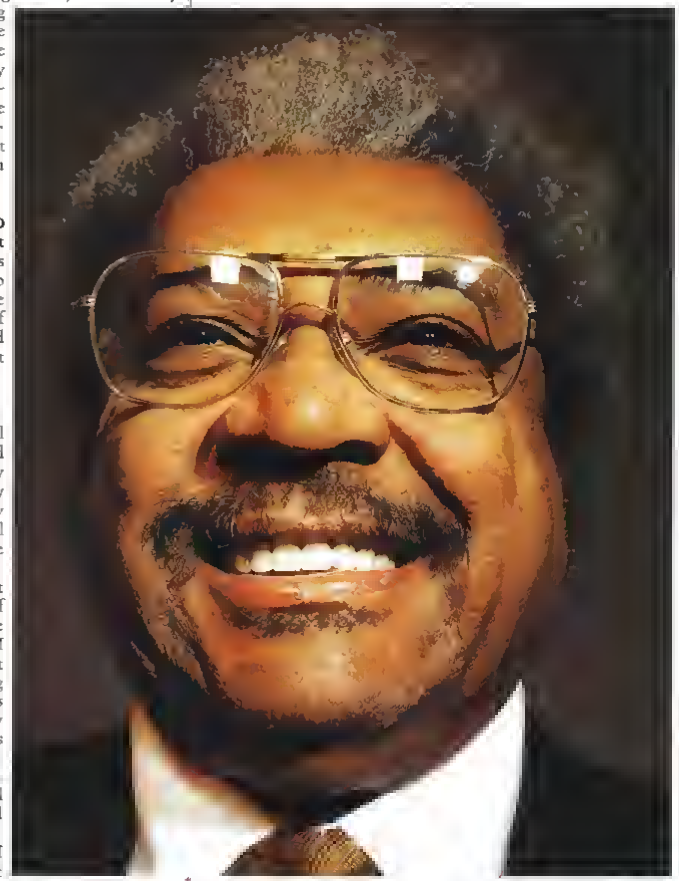
I don't know Don King, but I do know what he fears. I see it when the jury comes and goes, blinking in his eyes above the smile. It is the fear of a man who knows what he is, knows what the world thinks he is—a Cedar Road coon with a .357 bulging in his pocket—and knows what to expect from that world. Nearly seventy now, he remembers the number sewn on his prison shirt and what it was like inside.

I see his fear at the loft where, in a miracle of luck and good timing, he shows up to have his picture taken. The space is large, he is larger. Without taking off his coat he walks to a corner of the room and begins to work his phone. The farther off he moves, the larger he waxes, until the canvas of glass and sky behind him can no longer fit his silhouette.

No one breathes a word, no one comes near; no one dares broach the buffers of his size and scowl. When he's done with his call and walks back to us, he spots the chair the photographer wants to use, carved wood and leather, vaguely African, gargantuan.

"We won't need that," King says. "Maybe if the verdict was in. But I ain't going back to the slammer sittin' in no motherfuckin' throne." His laughter is a snort of bile.

Out comes the camera. Out comes the last thing we will know of him, spreading like the Milky Way, indifferent to time and justice. Don King's sweet, ungulty smile. ■



MICHAEL LAVINE

the next boxing story

BY CAL FUSSMAN

HONOR courage, love, and the Prince, but . . not . so fast. First, you've got to feel the lead pipe

I don't know the exact details, but that's okay, this is not a subtle story There was a man, a gentle man, on a street in Boston in 1953. He was the type of guy, it was once written, who would have addressed women in brothels as ma'am. For years, Ray Arcel trained boxers—he crafted seventeen champions in an age when the title actually meant something—and then he began promoting televised fights, which didn't sit well with the mob, which ran competing shows. And so one day on that street in Boston, a lead pipe camouflaged under a newspaper smashed Ray Arcel over the head and beat him until he was nearly dead, and he awoke in a hospital room, surrounded by guards just in case anyone returned to finish the job. He promoted for a little while after he recovered.



walked away heartsick, took a job with a friend who owned a foundry, and gracefully stepped into old age with his lovely wife. For nearly two decades, people rang his phone, asking him to help mold their fighters into champions. Each time, the sculptor said no.

Then one day, as a favor to a friend, Ray Arcel went to look over an unpolished stone of a fighter off the streets of Panama. Soon thereafter, Ray Arcel's old hands were under Roberto Duran's armpits, lifting him off the stool toward his opponent each time the bell rang. The jilted lover was back in the game, sculpting one of the great fighters in history.

The moral? If you love boxing—doesn't matter if you're a fighter, trainer, girlfriend, or aficionado—sooner or later, the lead pipe's coming. You may even walk away, as Ray Arcel did back in the fifties and as I, a simple fan and writer, did a couple of years ago.

But then—

THERE WAS NEITHER BLOOD nor security guards the morning I found myself divorced from boxing. I scratched my head and wondered, How is it that a heart stops loving? As a boy, I'd squirreled away dimes and quarters to buy a twenty-dollar closed-circuit ticket to see Ali and Frazier, clenched back tears when Ali went down, and was hoarse for days afterward. As a teen, I stepped through the ropes myself and had moments that'll guide me for as long as I live. As a young man, I drove almost a thousand miles in a day to watch Sugar Ray Leonard battle Roberto Duran. Yet in June of last year, on the night Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson were to have their rematch, I got in a Ryder moving truck and set off for my new home. A sports bar advertising the telecast appeared in front of me, my foot didn't even twitch toward the brake. And when the whole country howled about Tyson's ear biting and an outraged president condemned it, I just shook my head. Figures, I thought with a smirk.

God knows, there were plenty of reasons to leave. Hadn't we been suckered out of $49.95 too many times to watch Mike Tyson club the clueless while Don King filled his pockets and cried, "Everybody will sup at the table of brotherhood!" Hadn't the cancerlike growth of ruling organizations—WBC, WBA, WBO, WBU, IBF, et cetera—created so many champions that it became hard to name a single one? Friends who could describe a great fight from twenty-five years ago the way a tenor might sing his favorite aria had lost interest. Couldn't even be roped back by a fight they chanced upon on a Saturday afternoon, because the networks had bailed out, too. We were now in the era of prepubescent figure skaters.

Once the television was unpacked in my new house, I hooked up a satellite and came across the Classic Sports Network, a gift from the heavens, which broadcasts many of our century's athletic gems. Black-and-white footage of Sugar Ray Robinson, Jake LaMotta, Joe Louis, Jack Dempsey, Rocky Marciano, Willie Pep, and Sandy Saddler tempted me, moved me closer and closer to the tube, turned me into a kid again—and also showed me all that had gone wrong. The very core of the sport had rotted, the foundation that went back long before America's first heavyweight champion, John L. Sullivan, lumbered into bars more than a century ago and crowed, "I can lick any man in the house!" Sure, the game was always dirty, always rank with the sweet smell of larceny. You name it: rigged fights, swindled fighters, crooked managers, and the mob. But through it all, the great fighters knew that boxing was about confronting someone who could bring more out of a man than he knew he had. Boxing was all about answering questions.

What did Joe Louis say after winning the title for the first time? "I don't want nobody to call me champ until I beat Schmeling." He meant Max Schmeling, the German who had defeated him a year earlier and had come to symbolize Aryan supremacy. Max Schmeling, the Aryan who actually screamed in pain when Louis's right hand pulverized his liver in the rematch. After Jake LaMotta beat Sugar Ray Robinson for the first time, the rematch occurred *three weeks* later. Strip away all the poetry, preening, and Muslim missionary work from Muhammad Ali, and there was a man in red shorts who *lived* to fight Joe Frazier, a man who *lived* to fight Ali. Duran? Leonard? Thomas Hearns? Marvelous Marvin Hagler? They *had* to face one another in order to face themselves.

Then came the late eighties, and the sport's pure heart, which all the leeches had always sucked at, began to wither and die.

Lennox Lewis and Riddick Bowe, rivals in the 1988 Olympics, each got a share of the heavyweight championship as pros, then pointed fingers at each other, postured, and screamed for a half dozen years—but didn't fight. Oscar De La Hoya came out of the 1992 Olympics and made $60 million without a single memorable battle, cutting commercials thousands of miles away from the one man, 33-0 Felix Trinidad of Puerto Rico, who was capable of measuring his heart. Light heavyweight Roy Jones Jr., one of the most gifted fighters of all time, flirted with the idea of taking on a much heavier man who might push his skills to the brink—then backed off. Mike Tyson, the so-called baddest man on the planet, emerged from jail to become the most *protected* man on the planet, pushing over pushovers in $20 million exhibitions, taking on Evander Holyfield only after Holyfield had spent time in a cardiac unit and appeared shot.

Everyone blamed it on promoters protecting their cash cows, dueling cable companies that wouldn't share fighters, and the alphabet-soup organizations that needed their own champions in order to keep raking in title-fight sanction fees. But ultimately it was the fighters who'd broken the code and my heart. The fighters who'd failed to *demand* that moment in the ring that would settle the questions.

And then—

AND THEN, LAST NOVEMBER, I emerged from a New York subway to blink at a 145-foot-wide billboard in Times Square of the Prince. PRINCE NASEEM HAMED VS KEVIN KELLEY MADISON SQUARE GARDEN DECEMBER 19. HERE ON BUSINESS. HERE ON HBO. No, I told myself. No. no. no. Stick to the grainy black-and-whites.

But he wasn't easy to dodge, articles, commercials, and photographs of him began appearing everywhere. Somehow, the guy was getting under my skin. Naseem Hamed stood five feet three inches and weighed 126 pounds, had knocked out twenty-six of the twenty-eight men he'd faced, and had never been defeated as a professional, but he didn't bother much with the words *featherweight champion* when he spoke of himself. He preferred to use the word *legend*.

He'd just signed a six-fight deal with HBO, guaranteeing him $2 million a pop—a deal that could terminate should he lose just once. Yet here he was fighting outside his native British Isles for the first time, arriving at Kennedy Airport with forty-one pieces of luggage, to take on the best fighter in his division over the last decade on his opponent's home turf.

And so, against all my better judgment, I flicked on the remote and shook my head as the Prince, attired in leopard print, began his ring entrance down a specially constructed fashion-show runway glowing like Vegas. As if Madison Square Garden were his own private party, he did an MTV-pop-art-Arabian-rap belly dance that included Schwarzenegger poses, curtains, smoke, and confetti, while analyst Larry Merchant commented, "This may be the end of Western civilization as we know it."

Now that it was too late, now that I'd been suckered, I couldn't avert my eyes.

Midway through the entrance, the cameras focused on the challenger, Kevin Kelley, and *that's* when I felt myself inch forward. Kelley was apoplectic, punching the ropes and demanding that the Prince cut the crap and come in and fight, and surely Ray Arcel would have been the first to figure what was going on. "When you lose your head," Arcel would tell his fighters, "you lose the best part of your body." The Prince grasped the ring's top rope, somersaulted inside, and stepped to within a whisker of Kelley's face. All the questions were laid bare.

Two minutes into the fight, the Prince was on his ass. It was arrogance, pure arrogance, for he believed himself so nimble that he could pull his head straight back to avoid oncoming punches, a cardinal sin in boxing, especially when your opponent's arm span extends six inches beyond yours. But the tents did not fold up, this was no circus act. Soon, the dervish had Kelley backing up from punches that came from improbable angles. The Prince was playing chess with pieces that had never been seen before. Back and forth it went, the Prince lunging from a distance and hitting and missing, Kelley countering, the Prince flailing and reaching down to the canvas with his



IT USED TO BE THAT BOXING WAS ABOUT CONFRONTING THE MAN WHO COULD BRING OUT MORE IN YOU THAN YOU KNEW YOU HAD. SOME OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED THE BELL, FROM LEFT, JACK DEMPSEY IN THE EARLY TWENTIES, MAX SCHMELING AND JOE LOUIS 1938, JAKE LAMOTTA AND SUGAR RAY ROBINSON 1945, "SMOKIN'" JOE FRAZIER AND MUHAMMAD ALI 1971, SUGAR RAY LEONARD AND ROBERTO DURAN 1989

gloves for balance, and the ref scoring two dubious knockdowns against him Kelley was convinced he was on the verge of a knockout, unaware of the left that would catapult him flat on his back and leave him there to find the Prince winking at him Finally, a left as fluid and natural as a torrential stream put Kelley down in a stupor—the fight's sixth knockdown in four rounds!—and ended it For heaven's sake, the Prince was little bigger than gymnast Kerri Strug, but nobody that size had ever hit like *that*, not even the greats on the Classic Sports Network The Garden was roaring for the most entertaining fight there in decades, the Prince was proclaiming he had the heart of a lion, Kelley's trainer was howling for a rematch, and analyst George Foreman was giggling his head off

And so, dammit, was I

SO I FIGURED I WAS SCREWED when I pulled up to his office in Sheffield, England, two hours late, with my front headlight smashed because some idiot was driving on the right side of the road After all, it's the Prince who keeps everybody waiting for him, not the other way around

"Make yourself comfortable," the Prince said with a smile "Do you need a pad and pen?"

That s the thing about Naz He is always catching you off-balance Expect a mercurial man who choreographs his moves with the help of Michael Jackson, pals around with the rock group U2, and poses for promo shots with taxidermed leopards, not to mention with flames shooting from his boxing gloves and instead you get a calm man in black jeans and a polo shirt, lovingly stroking his wife's seven-month-pregnant belly Expect a stonemason's hands, and shake a sculptor's Expect tirades and grandiose predictions, and get the most polite, levelheaded Yorkshireman's articulations Expect a self-centered brat, and discover a man who wants to know about your kids

Ask Naz about the leopard shorts, and do you know what he wants to talk about? Work. How he honored his father s mettle and work ethic, how his father had left a farming village in Yemen in the forties, boarded a boat that nearly capsized in a storm, worked the daily grind of the steel mills in Sheffield, and saved enough to buy a corner store How his parents raised nine kids in a tight Muslim family and restrained their anger when racist thugs threw bricks through windows of their shop How his father felt it prudent for his boys to learn to protect themselves and took them to the neighborhood boxing gym.

Oh so it was the racism that ignited his furnace? The Prince waved me off "I was seven years old when I went into that gym. I was just a kid with a smile on my face It was like music to me. I felt the movements from the very first day."

And that sledgehammer power—it must come from some great-grandfather who could hft a camel over his head? "No," he said, smiling "It comes from speed, timing precision, practice." Practice with sparring partners up to seventy pounds heavier and with angles, ever shifting angles, like light darting through a prism

How could it be that a man this down-to-earth, this balanced, this cool and scientific could be the shaman prancing in leopard skin and smoke? How could he give over so much of himself to the hype without compromising the heart, as so many others in boxing's carnival tent have?

"To build a fight up, you've got to act in a certain manner to pull people in People want to be entertained these days I enjoy doing it That's me. I'm having fun, but it's more than that From the moment that entrance begins I'm beating up my opponents mentally I'm demoralizing them. One of the best things to do in boxing, if you can, is to break a man's mind. If you can break his mind, you can break his body But the entrance means nothing if you don't produce in the ring I *produce*

"When people think about boxing they think about heavyweights When people talk about boxing in Britain, automatically they think about a featherweight I'm going to cause the same reaction in America. I told the people when I came to New York, I am what you need *I am what you need* Wait and see



"I'm not one of those fighters to dodge anybody This is how I work I look at a piece of paper with the best fighters in my division Kevin Kelley is probably the best out of the lot Let me go to New York to take him on Give him the chance of his life He'll probably box the best he'll ever box And then I'll take him out, beat him like he's never been beat before And that's exactly what happened

"Then it's next on the list I'd wanted the WBA title for three years So I fought [Wilfredo] Vazquez The WBA stripped away his title before the fight Regardless I knocked out a three time champion on his twenty second title fight The belts don't make the fighters The fighters make the belts I'll beat all the champions around me, and then I'll move up in weight and do it again I'm thinking of numerous titles at numerous weights I'll bamboozle them all They won't have a clue where I'm coming from because I m totally unpredictable."

All this without the slightest trace of venom The more I observed the Prince, in fact, the more I smelled traces of Ali, a man fighting not out of rage but out of an appetite for challenge, out of love

Listening, I could see why Seth Abraham, controller of the biggest boxing bank in the world, HBO, was putting up billboards all over New York "If we had a couple of Nazzes," Abraham had told me, "they'd be the Wyatt Earps of boxing and clean up Dodge City" People talked about the Prince being the first fighter of the twenty first century, how his ring entrances and style would transform the sport, but what they overlooked was the fact that he was really bringing back the good old days when you didn't know what the hell was going to happen when the bell rang but had to be there to find out Even HBO's own man behind the mike, Jim Lampley, said "I look at Naz's list and think every one of those opponents could knock him out This is going to be a great ride for as long as it lasts."

Just before leaving the Prince, my wife asked him to pose for a picture with our kids The instant she lifted the camera, I saw it happen, but not because he willed it to occur It just happened—an incandescence came bursting from him, and he was another person By nature, he made a great photo

We bid him farewell Dammit, no matter how clearly I saw the gantlet of lead pipes awaiting, I was about to climb back on that ride

BUT NOT SO FAST

The craziest of notions occurred to me I needed to ask a woman if it was wise to fall in love again I needed to ask Mrs Ray Arcel

Turns out Ray's widow is a woman with a thousand interests and a poet s passion for life There was little time in her day or room in her heart for what boxing had become I knocked on her door with a tape of the Prince–Kevin Kelley fight behind my back Mrs Arcel, a short, peppy woman with sparkling eyes, led me into her living room to a table that held a bottle of champagne and a bowl full of strawberries "Look, I'm getting ready to go to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao," she said "There are a million other people who are more appropriate to ask than me."

"I know I just want you to look at this and tell me what you think."

The tape rolled and so did the smoke, the leopard spots, and the Prince.

"This is obscene!" she cried. "Scandalous! Makes me want to vomit If this is how they have to promote boxing, then boxing is dead!" A long, long pause "You know something, if this were a Broadway show, it d be pretty good Oh! That's it, Kevin Knock him down He deserves it, the wiseass! Oh! Ohh! Ohhh! Wow, you really get your money's worth Ohhh! Ohhhh! This Prince has talent If only he had some classical training. *Ohhhh! Ohhhhh! Ohhhhhhhhh!*"

When it was over, I popped out the tape and looked at her

"You're not going to ask me to measure the Prince against the greats?" she asked "You're not going to compare him to Benny Leonard, Henry Armstrong, or Sandy Saddler, are you? You didn't come here to—"

"I came here," I said, "to ask if you d care to accompany me to the Prince's next fight."

Her eyes glistened, and a smile pursed her lips *'Sure,"* she purred *it*



Sort of English, but Better

On a getaway trip to Wales, Esquire discovers a community as old as the hills and a modern version of traditional British country clothing: lightweight tweeds, cashmere sweaters, and updated plaids—the sort of masculine stuff that's as at home in the Cotswolds as it is in Cleveland

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN WATTS

NO, THIS CLASSIC TRENCH ISN'T NEW—HASN'T ACTUALLY, CHANGED IN DECADES—BUT IT LOOKS FRESH, GIVEN ITS THICK LODENLIKE LINING. THAT ULTRALOFTY FABRIC TREATMENT HAPPENS TO BE ONE OF THE HALLMARKS OF THIS FALL'S FINEST STYLE. COTTON-AND-LYCRA TRENCH COAT WITH WOOL LINING ($795) BY BURBERRYS, FLAT-FRONT PLAID WOOL TROUSERS ($281) BY ETRO, CABLE-KNIT CASHMERE TURTLENECK ($398) BY POLO BY RALPH LAUREN, LEATHER LACE-UPS ($460) BY DOLCE & GABBANA. HER JACKET AND BOOTS BY BARBOUR, SWEATER AND SKIRT BY MARC JACOBS.



"That's Eddie, a local cattle driver," says photographer Ben Watts, who shot these pictures in and around his hometown of Llangefni, on the isle of Anglesey. "He drives the cows in a truck to the farmers' auction in town. In the background is the house where I lived. It's very much the same, except for a new door, and the windows have a fresh coat of paint. My auntie still lives there."

'The minister gives sermons in Welsh, which is the first language for everyone in Wales," says Watts. "I remember from my grandfather's funeral that he gives very animated sermons."



TRADITIONAL TWEEDS ARE [redacted] ROUGH AND HEAVY AS WET CANVAS. THIS ISN'T A TRADITIONAL TWEED. IN FACT, IT'S LIGHT ENOUGH TO BE WORN TO WORK, WHICH YOU CAN DO, NO PROBLEM. IF YOU SWAP THE CASUAL TURTLENECK FOR A SHIRT AND TIE, THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED CLASSIC ENGLISH SUIT ($425) BY NAUTICA. BY DAVID CHU. LAMB'S-WOOL TURTLENECK ($115) BY DKNY



"These kids are fourteen years old and students at Llangefni, the school I used to go to," says Watts. and tackling one another. When the teacher said, 'We've only five minutes left,' they were saying, "When they arrived, they weren't muddy at all. Within minutes, they were diving right into the slop. 'We've got all day. C'mon, please get us out of French!' Not much ever happens on Anglesey."

LIKE MANY OF THE SPORT COATS ON THESE PAGES, THIS JACKET MIGHT APPEAR UNCOMFORTABLE HEAVY, BUT IT'S NOT THE WOOL IS SPUN AND WOVEN IN SUCH A WAY AS TO CREATE A CERTAIN AIR-FILLED LOFTINESS THAT HAS NONE OF THE WEIGHT OR DISCOMFORT OF TYPICAL TWEED. THREE-BUTTON SINGLE-BREASTED TWEED JACKET ($595) BOILED WOOL TURTLENECK ($275), AND FLAT-FRONT WOOL TROUSERS ($125) BY BOSS HUGO BOSS. LEATHER LACE-UPS ($460) BY DOLCE & GABBANA.

OPPOSITE PAGE: SOME MEN—MEN WORTH ADMIRING—DON'T CONFINE THEIR SUITS TO THE EXECUTIVE SUITE. THEY KNOW THE POWER OF TWO WELL-TAILORED PIECES IN ANY SITUATION. THEY ALSO KNOW HOW EASY IT IS: ONE HANGER, NO HASSLES. SINGLE-BREASTED UNLINED WOOL-NYLON SUIT ($1,075) BY CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION. ZIP-FRONT WOOL SWEATER ($308) BY NEW YORK INDUSTRIE. BY STAFF INT'L. HER TRENCH COAT BY BURBERRY'S. STOCKINGS BY DKNY. BOOTS BY BARBOUR. THIS PAGE: ROUGH STITCHING GIVES THIS SWEATER A HAND-KNIT FEEL. WOOL TURTLENECK WITH ZIP-UP COLLAR ($780) AND FLAT-FRONT WOOL TROUSERS ($370) BY DOLCE & GABBANA. HER SWEATER BY MARC JACOBS.





"When we arrived to take these pictures, it was rainy, as usual," says Watts. "It always rains in Wales. This was the one time the sun came out during our trip, and it was truly a brilliant, sunny day. When the sun shines in Wales—rare as it is—it's absolutely the most beautiful place to be in the world."

but there can be beautiful, saturated colors in the rain—the deep, rich colors of the Welsh countryside.

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NATROL AT FINE HEALTH FOOD STORES

The Male Animal

Boxing Ving

To get in shape to play the lead in the Sonny Liston story, actor Ving Rhames followed this program designed by Sugar Ray Leonard. You can, too

By Ted Allen



The fist is six inches wide and powering smack into your face again and again and again, like a giant piston: fast, and you're staring straight into the fighter's unblinking eyes because they command you to do so, and you have no doubt that he hates you—hates you—and you damn sure dare not flinch.

You are in the fighter's house in his *house*.

On the other end of the fist is a man, Irving "Ving" Rhames, who weighed 208.5 pounds when he got up this morning, though he used to tip the scales at 221. Sweat streams from the crown of his shiny shaved head, and he snorts hard with every punch, *Hnhh! Hnhh! Hnhh!*, because this is not a performance—he has already hyperextended his elbow once doing this—it is a serious training session. A puff of air kisses your eyeballs with each jab because, instead of crushing your septum into your brains and bringing about the end of your pathetic self for defiling a twenty-by-twenty-foot patch of canvas to which you hold no title, the fist is stopping precisely half an inch from your nose. It is stopping there because thirty-six-year-old Rhames is using it, his left, to take a measurement for its compadre, his right.

He has come far in the brutal calculus of mano a mano under the tutelage of Sugar Ray Leonard, which, in terms of this combination of fisticuffs, means he employs one fist to



Rhames above, and at left with training partner Sugar Ray Leonard. Not since De Niro gained fifty pounds to play Jake LaMotta has an actor brought such realism to the celluloid ring.

MATTHEW WELCH



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MERCK

Introducing the first and only pill clinically proven to treat hair loss in men.

PROPECIA is a medical breakthrough – the first pill that effectively treats male pattern hair loss on the vertex (at top of head) and anterior mid-scalp area

By all measures, the clinical results of PROPECIA in men are impressive *

- 83% maintained their hair based on hair count (vs. 28% with placebo)
- 66% had visible regrowth as rated by independent dermatologists (vs. 7% with placebo)
- 80% were rated as improved by clinical doctors (vs 47% with placebo)
- Most men reported an increase in the amount of hair, a decrease in hair loss, and improvement in appearance

*Based on vertex studies at 24 months of men 18 to 41 with mild to moderate hair loss

Scientists have recently discovered that men who suffer from male pattern hair loss have an increased level of a substance called DHT in their scalps. PROPECIA blocks the formation of DHT, an apparent cause of hair loss. The benefit, however, of lowering DHT has not been determined Importantly, PROPECIA helps grow natural hair – not just peach fuzz – and is as convenient to take as a vitamin one pill a day

Only a doctor can determine if PROPECIA is right for you PROPECIA is for **men only.** Further, women who are or may potentially be pregnant must not use PROPECIA and should not handle crushed or broken tablets because of the risk of a specific kind of birth defect (See accompanying Patient Information for details.) PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling

You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more to see visible results PROPECIA may not regrow all your hair And if you stop using this product, you will gradually lose the hair you have gained There is not sufficient evidence that PROPECIA works for recession at the temporal areas. If you haven't seen results after 12 months of using PROPECIA, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit.

Like all prescription products, PROPECIA may cause side effects A very small number of men experienced certain side effects, such as less desire for sex, difficulty in achieving an erection, and a decrease in the amount of semen Each of these side effects occurred in less than 2% of men These side effects were reversible and went away in men who stopped taking PROPECIA. They also disappeared in most men (58%) who continued taking PROPECIA.

So start talking to your doctor. And stop thinking further hair loss is inevitable

CALL 1-800-344-6622 or visit our website at www.propecia.com today to receive detailed product information, including clinical "before and after" photographs.

Please read the next page for additional information

Propecia™
(finasteride)
Helping make hair loss history™

Propecia™*
(Finasteride) Tablets

Patient Information about PROPECIA®

(Pro-pee-sha)

Generic name: finasteride (fin-AS-tur-eyed)

PROPECIA is for use by MEN ONLY**

Please read this leaflet before you start taking PROPECIA. Also, read the information included with PROPECIA each time you renew your prescription just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss PROPECIA when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups.

What is PROPECIA used for?

PROPECIA is used for the treatment of male pattern hair loss on the vertex and the anterior mid-scalp area.

PROPECIA is for use by **MEN ONLY** and should **NOT** be used by women or children.

What is male pattern hair loss?

Male pattern hair loss is a common condition in which men experience thinning of the hair on the scalp. Often, this results in a receding hairline and/or balding on the top of the head. These changes typically begin gradually in men in their 20s.

Doctors believe male pattern hair loss is due to heredity and is dependent on hormonal effects. Doctors refer to this type of hair loss as androgenetic alopecia.

Results of clinical studies:

For 12 months, doctors studied over 1800 men aged 18 to 41 with mild to moderate amounts of ongoing hair loss. All men, whether receiving PROPECIA or placebo (a pill containing no medication), were given a medicated shampoo (Neutrogena T/Gel**** Shampoo). Of these men, approximately 1200 with hair loss at the top of the head were studied for an additional 12 months. In general, men who took PROPECIA maintained or increased the number of visible scalp hairs and noticed improvement in the first year, with the effect maintained in the second year. Hair counts in men who did not take PROPECIA continued to decrease.

In one study, patients were questioned on the growth of body hair. PROPECIA did not appear to affect hair in places other than the scalp.

Will PROPECIA work for me?

For most men, PROPECIA increases the number of scalp hairs, helping to fill in thin or bald areas of the scalp. Men taking PROPECIA noted a slowing of hair loss during two years of use. Although results will vary, generally you will not be able to grow back all of the hair you have lost. There is not sufficient evidence that PROPECIA works in the treatment of receding hairline in the temporal area on both sides of the head.

Male pattern hair loss occurs gradually over time. On average, healthy hair grows only about half an inch each month. Therefore, it will take time to see any effect.

You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more before you see a benefit from taking PROPECIA. PROPECIA can only work over the long term if you continue taking it. If the drug has not worked for you in twelve months, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit. If you stop taking PROPECIA, you will likely lose the hair you have gained within 12 months of stopping treatment. You should discuss this with your doctor.

How should I take PROPECIA?

Follow your doctor's instructions.

- Take one tablet by mouth each day.
- You may take PROPECIA with or without food.
- If you forget to take PROPECIA, do not take an extra tablet. Just take the next tablet as usual.

PROPECIA will not work faster or better if you take it more than once a day.

Who should NOT take PROPECIA?

- PROPECIA is for the treatment of male pattern hair loss in **MEN ONLY** and should not be taken by women or children.
- Anyone allergic to any of the ingredients.

A warning about PROPECIA and pregnancy.

- **Women who are or may potentially be pregnant:**
  - **must not use PROPECIA.**
  - **should not handle crushed or broken tablets of PROPECIA.**

If a woman who is pregnant with a male baby absorbs the active ingredient in PROPECIA, either by swallowing or through the skin, it may cause abnormalities of a male baby's sex organs. If a woman who is pregnant comes into contact with the active ingredient in PROPECIA, a doctor should be consulted. PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.

What are the possible side effects of PROPECIA?

Like all prescription products, PROPECIA may cause side effects. In clinical studies, side effects from PROPECIA were uncommon and did not affect most men. A small number of men experienced certain sexual side effects. These men reported one or more of the following: less desire for sex, difficulty in achieving an erection, and a decrease in the amount of semen. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 2% of men. These side effects went away in men who stopped taking PROPECIA. They also disappeared in most men who continued taking PROPECIA.

The active ingredient in PROPECIA is also used by older men at a five times higher dose to treat enlargement of the prostate. Some of these men reported other side effects, including problems with ejaculation, breast swelling and/or tenderness and allergic reactions such as lip swelling and rash. In clinical studies with PROPECIA, these side effects occurred as often in men taking placebo as in those taking PROPECIA.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual effects.

- **PROPECIA can affect a blood test called PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) for the screening of prostate cancer. If you have a PSA test done, you should tell your doctor that you are taking PROPECIA.**

Storage and handling.

Keep PROPECIA in the original container and keep the container closed. Store in a dry place at room temperature. **PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.**

Do not give your PROPECIA tablets to anyone else. It has been prescribed only for you. Keep PROPECIA and all medicine out of the reach of children.

THIS LEAFLET PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROPECIA. IF AFTER READING THIS LEAFLET YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR ARE NOT SURE ABOUT ANYTHING, ASK YOUR DOCTOR.

1-800-830-7375, Monday through Friday 8:30 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M. (ET).

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Propecia™
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gauge where to throw the other, how far and how hard. Were this a lesser actor, someone looking to pick up a paycheck for playing a fighter, you would feel that puff of air off to the side of your right ear, and a camera angle would make it look more or less real. "You know," Sugar Ray says, "you play basketball, you play tennis, you play golf. You don't *play* boxing."

Ving Rhames—who has played in *Striptease*, *Dave*, *Con Air*, *Rosewood*, *Mission: Impossible I* and *II*, and *Out of Sight*—is, here, not playing anything.

And it is very, very fortunate for you, little man, that the right fist never gets thrown.

Sonny Liston liked his house nice and cozy, and he liked to fill it up with himself. He was a puncher, a big man not one to dance around. He became heavyweight champion of the world in 1962 by shrinking the size of the ring to his taste, trapping Floyd Patterson within those unfriendly confines and battering him to the carpet in one round. This is why, when Ving Rhames shadowboxes in a private Santa Monica gym with Sugar Ray Leonard and Darrell Foster, Sugar's coach from Hearns to Hagler, he does so on a ten by ten foot wooden platform. He is learning to box in a Liston sized ring. He is training as Liston did—with a few concessions to modern nutrition and strength conditioning—ninety minutes a day, three days a week, for more than three months.

Rhames is doing this—dropping the weight, learning the chops—because he has taken on a responsibility: to become the man, to see through his angry eyes, to punch through his frustration for Paramount Pictures' Sonny Liston story. The goal, Rhames says, is to have "the most authentic, the most realistic, the best fight scenes in the history of film." Leonard and Foster are getting him there.

There will be contact.

This is why Rhames is permitting Foster to hurl a ten-pound medicine ball into his gut—to teach the abs to tighten up, take a punch. Why he's running five miles each A.M. at six. Wrapping the tools of his trade and plunging them into sixteen ounce gloves and slugging Sugar Ray's padded hands in a rapid-fire combination as the coach yells "One-two!" Cultivating power in those punches on the heavy bag, hand-eye on the double-end bag (he's got it down) and the speed bag (he's better with his left hand than his right). Why he's learning to possess the ring. Why he's looking at you that way.

MOST OF RHAMES'S LIFE AS AN ACTOR HAS BEEN ABOUT THAT ABILITY TO INTIMIDATE PHYSICALLY, TO MENACE ONSCREEN. CASTING DIRECTORS NOTICE THE TREE-TRUNK ARMS BEFORE THE MISCHIEVOUS EYES, THE CLIPPED SHAKESPEAREAN ELOCUTION.

Most of Rhames's life as an actor has been about that ability to intimidate physically, to menace onscreen: a bouncer, a muscley convict. "I was cast as Sonny Liston, if you think about it," Rhames says. "Strong black guy, deep voice." Casting directors have a tendency to notice the tree-trunk arms before the mischievous eyes, the clipped Shakespearean elocution. His most widely known character, the earringed Marcellus Wallace in *Pulp Fiction*, was a strongman of few words, although seven of them were especially memorable and involved getting "medieval." But he broke out big with the HBO movie *Don King: Only in America*, delivering a rich, nuanced interpretation of the promoter, most notably with hilarious soliloquies a la Iago in *Othello*. The King part landed Rhames a Golden Globe award (which he handed off to a perplexed Jack Lemmon during the awards ceremony, even though he'd never considered Lemmon a particular source of inspiration; later the Golden Globe people sent Rhames another statue).

Liston cultivated his image as one of the meanest sons of bitches ever to walk the earth, and he scared the hell out of a racially charged America. "Black people didn't like him," Rhames says. "The NAACP didn't want him to be champ because they wanted positive civil rights images." He was a sullen, glowering street tough with a record. He had done time for armed robbery before he shucked the striped suit for silk trunks. He was muscle for the mob, which owned him his whole career. The press called him a jungle beast and a latter day caveman. When he appeared on the cover of Esquire in a Santa Claus hat a year after he took his title, advertisers howled, subscribers demanded refunds.

Liston lost his title to a rambunctious Cassius Clay in 1964—some said his soul, too, and that the fix was in. He took the ultimate dive in 1970, a violent and mysterious death—could've been a needle, could've been whacked.

That much we know. Rhames has tracked down Liston's aging friends, trainers, sparring partners; they remember a funny man who

[*continued on page 126 after The Workout*]

MATTHEW WELCH

The Workout

You step into the ring. You tell the coach it is your desire to box.

Really, he says.

Then he invites you to remove your loafers from his canvas. "The approach we took with Ving was the way you train an amateur fighter," says Darrell Foster (bottom photo, right), coach to Sugar Ray Leonard since the seventies and the owner of Omega Bodies fitness consultancy in Pasadena, California. "We didn't want Ving to feel entitled to get in the ring from day one."

Leonard and Foster's training prescription is one you can put into practice, too, even if you don't have a professional fight coach and aren't starting with the 221 pounds of regularly flexed human steel that Rhames brought to the deal. Any or all of the parts of Rhames's workout can help you, whether you actually go to a boxing gym or hang a bag from the basement ceiling. It's about strength, endurance, agility, and hand-eye coordination, all of which are equally useful whether your plan actually involves boxing or ballet (which, come to think of it, aren't as different as you might think, except for the clothes).

For starters, a diet low in sugar and heavy on protein and complex carbohydrates for energy (brown rice, baked potatoes, pastas); a morning run of three to five miles, three times a week; and some stretching exercises.

Then, the gym.


1

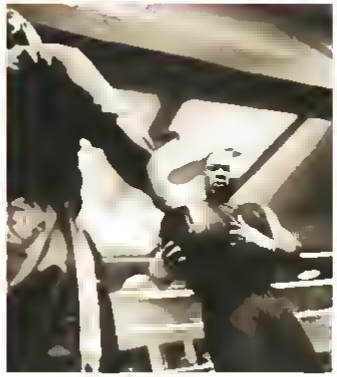



3

1. FIFTEEN MINUTES. Shadowbox in a defined space before a mirror, keeping your dukes in a protective position in front of your pretty mug. Move around the "ring", shuffling without ever crossing your feet; preserves balance. Loosen up and breathe. Fill up all four corners of the space. Foster calls this developing "ring generalship"—"You assume a certain presence about your house," he says. "It's yours. That's the way we wanted Ving's attitude to be about his opponent or anybody stepping into his home. You don't belong here."

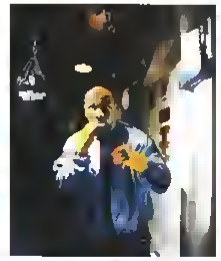
2. FIFTEEN MINUTES. Into the ring. With a partner. He wears mitts, you wear eighteen-ounce gloves (which will make your punches feel like lightning when you're wearing the regulation ten-ouncers of an actual fight). Work through combination punches: jabs, hooks, and slipping your head down after you punch in preparation for the other guy's retaliation. (If you watch the Classic Sports Network, you probably are more able to do this than you think.) You're aiming your fists and practicing your footwork and balance, but you're also now aware of someone on your turf, someone who needs to be dominated. You're working highly repetitive exercises, as Foster says. "A professional fighter, when he gets in trouble in the ring, his body, pretty much out of instinct, reverts back to how it was trained."


2

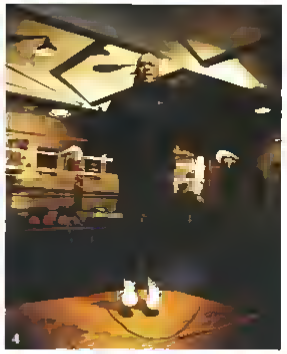


MATTHEW WELCH





3. FIFTEEN MINUTES. To the heavy bag for five minutes: you throw the punches you were throwing at your trainer, only at full strength. Develops your power. Then to the double-end bag—a slippery apparatus suspended between floor and ceiling with rope and spring, kind of like a gigantic paddle ball—for hand-eye coordination and timing. Ditto for the speed bag, which develops rhythm.


4

4. FIVE MINUTES. Jump rope: this builds hand-foot coordination and the sense of being light on the feet. It's also one of the best aerobic exercises you can do.


5

5. TEN MINUTES. Abdominal exercises. A brutal-looking series of one-arm push-ups in which the body faces sideways, not downward, and scissors itself up and down. Also, the classic ten-pound medicine ball to the gut: develops abdominal muscles so they can take a punch. Sage counsel of Sugar Ray: "When you're not trained to take punches, man, it hurts like shit." Then home to the hot tub. Any questions, Rhames says, call Darrell and for a small fee.

told X-rated Redd Foxx jokes as he jogged along the beach. Who stuffed rock candy in his manager's mouth when he knew reporters were coming and then smacked the guy and had him split the rocks out like teeth. Who did a movie produced by Jack Nicholson (*Head*, in 1968) an episode of *Love, American Style* and an airline commercial with Andy Warhol. "I think there's a part of Sonny that's a part of every black man," Rhames says. "I know before I became known...I walked into a store and

"THIS IS MY THING. SINCE I'M REPRESENTING A MAN'S LIFE, I OWE IT TO HIM AND HIS NAME TO GIVE IT MY BLOOD, SWEAT, TEARS—EVERYTHING THAT HE GAVE."

security guards would look at me like, 'Who's that bald-headed, big black guy?'" The cops in Beverly Hills pull him over because he's a bald-headed, big black guy in a Lexus. "A lot of times, external forces can try to dictate who you are. I think there's a whole 'nother side of him that the world hasn't seen.

"This is my thing," Rhames says. "Since I'm representing a man's life, I owe it to him and his name to give it my blood, sweat, tears—everything that he gave."

Ving Rhames is in the ring with Sugar Ray Leonard, which—even today—is not a place you want to be. "I want him to really feel what it's like to be hit," Leonard says, explaining the necessity of bruising Rhames's ribs. "To really experience that—not really pain—that touch. He's becoming a fighter. He's become a fighter."

Rhames plans to continue Leonard's boxing workout even after the Liston job. "It's really the ultimate sport," Rhames says. "Mind, body, soul, man versus man."

Before long, Foster says, Rhames will actually be skilled enough and strong enough to box professionally. "His movement around the ring, the presence of his body, his hands—all the things begin to come together," the coach says. "It becomes instinctive."

But has he yet developed the necessary hatred, that visceral sense of violation at the incursion of Darrell Foster into Ving Rhames's ring, his house?

"No," Rhames says. "At this point, it would be his house." He turns to Foster. "This is your house, man."

Foster nods. "That was a good answer."

The Equipment



HEADGEAR. A fly-weight blow can cause heavyweight damage. Which is bad. And why rookies, amateurs, and training pros use these. In vinyl ($60) or leather ($90).



BAGS. The speed bag ($44) is used to hone your hand-eye coordination; the double-end bag ($80), which bounces all over the place, is for reflexes. Both are as essential to winning a round as not getting knocked on your satin shorts.



MOVING TARGET. Your training partner wears these mitts ($60) to provide a moving object for you to focus on—presumably a stand-in for an opponent's head—and hit. Hard. It's not your sister.



BOXING GLOVES. After training w th everyth ng else, slip these 10-ounc ers on ($58) and step into the ring. Now go to your corner and come out fighting. And don t look down when someone says your shoelace is untied.



GLOVES. With heavy foam padd ng, these 18-ounce gloves ($186) are used to develop arm endurance while shadowboxing. Replaced with 10-ouncers for the ring, they help a boxer swing faster, better.



MEDICINE BALL. Lead th ... ...



Jack Be Nimble, Jack Be Quick, Jack Saved My Fat Ass

By Cal Fussman

Wherein a plump Perfect Man induces the king of calisthenics to teach him old-fashioned fitness

AT AGE FORTY ONE, HE PROVED IT POSSIBLE TO ESCAPE FROM Alcatraz by swimming to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco while wearing handcuffs At forty-five, he completed a thousand push-ups and a thousand chin-ups in an hour and twenty two minutes with blisters under his calluses At sixty he swam from Alcatraz to Fisherman s Wharf handcuffed, shackled and *towing a thousand-pound boat* At seventy, battling currents while handcuffed and shackled, he towed *seventy* boats holding seventy people for a mile and a half across Long Beach Harbor

"How ya doin' Jack?" I stuck out my hand

"I can't die," Jack LaLanne said "It would ruin my image."

Could I have chosen any better? For cryin' out loud, you can't do a jumping jack anymore without kicking a personal trainer in the shins, but which of them, when asked a half century from now to don a one-piece jumpsuit, will look half as good as Jack LaLanne does in one at eighty three? Who on earth can possibly know more about getting in shape than the guy who *gave us* the jumping jack? Look at that stomach—bedrock That's *exactly* what The Perfect Man was after

Suddenly, my head was bowed, my eyes dropping toward my feet Where were my feet? All I could see was my belly A belly that Vegas would have laid 2-1 Jack couldn't have towed from Alcatraz to Fisherman's Wharf "I don't quite know how it happened, Jack Marriage. The kids Working all day to make ends meet Okay, I admit it, I've always been a sucker for desserts "

"*Bullcrap!*" Jack boomed rattling my bones "It was the devil!"

I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO HIS HOME OUTSIDE SAN LUIS OBISPO CALI- fornia, to learn how to develop a set of washboard abs I had no idea that Jack LaLanne—who'd transformed himself from pimply faced sugarholic into Mr America, godfather of the fitness movement, television star spa franchiser, and inventor of exercises like pretending to crack a walnut between the buttocks—would lead me to religion

"The problem isn't here," he said, pointing to my belly "It all starts up *here*. Right between the ears You can't give in to the devil I've worked out every day since I was fifteen years old Haven't missed a day "

"Wasn't there *one* day when you didn't want to?"

"*One* day? *Every* day I don't feel like working out Shit, leave a hot bed and a hot woman and go into a cold gym at five in the morning? It's discipline Pride and discipline I work out first thing in the morning to get it the hell out of the way Takes me two hours An hour with the weights and an hour in the pool At seven, my conscience is clear I look myself in the mirror and say, *Jack, you've done it again!* "

I'd heard about those workouts Up until a few years ago he'd offered $10,000 to anyone who could keep up with him Never had to pay a dime.

"Do you know there's more fat people than there's ever been in our history?" Jack said "It's terrible People who don t eat right, don't exercise They drink, then go to church and then it s 'Dear God, dear God! Please help me with this Please give me that!' Hey, God is not going to do a thing for you *You* do it He gives you the *power* to do it Listen, in the sixty-eight years I've been doing this, I've never once heard Jesus knocking on my door at five in the morning, saying, 'Jack, I'll work out for you today' " There was a clap on my back and another bone rattler "C'mon, there's no time to lose!"

My intestines began to twitch with the dread of a workout after months of inactivity Hesitation flooded through me as I began to stretch while Jack went off to get a chair "I haven't really warmed up," I said

"Warm ups? A bunch of *bullcrap*! Okay, there's a lion He's in the jungle He hasn t eaten for two days Little antelope comes by Is that lion going to warm up? *No!* He goes out and gets that sucker and eats him He doesn t warm up " Jack slapped my belly "C'mon, let s get to it!"

The chair was set in the center of the living room "I'm going to show you a few exercises and give you a book with more I want you to change your program every three weeks You'll get better results if you don't get stale Trouble is, people do the same damn thing over and over That's why so much of that equipment that s bought is in the closet after two weeks, gathering dust Boredom *boredom!* If you're creative, all you need to exercise is a chair Cheaper than buying all those things you see on TV Two minute abs! What a load of *bullcrap*! Go on, lie on your back, feet on the chair "

The idea was to cross my arms on my chest and sit up I strained and confronted the critical mass of hundreds of tiramisus, Key-lime pies, banana splits, spumonis, cheesecakes, and chocolate-hazelnut truffles I gasped, howled, and managed to lift the load three times I was spent

"Here's another pistol! Sit in the chair Put your hands on the sides of the chair Now move your legs out so that they're on the floor, but keep your hands on the chair behind you That's it—so your buttocks are suspended over the ground Now, *push up. Now* you're burning calories "

There were stomach crunches, leg raises, leg crosses, toe-touching windmills There were lessons on how to walk aerobically, with arms swinging dramatically as if to punch holes through the ceiling, and lessons in breathing, because, like a fire, the more oxygen the body consumes, the more calories it burns There were more than a hundred additional calisthenics in a book he handed me called *Revitalize Your Life After 50* The fact that I'm only forty-one did not offend me Truth is, in creme brûlée years, I'm 128

"How much exercising do I have to do to turn this"—I smacked my belly—"into a washboard?"

"You could never exercise *that* to a washboard Can't do it! You've got to watch your diet "

I cringed

"I want you to get a calorie book and start counting No more than two thousand a day Eat fish, chicken, turkey, vegetables, and fruits Some potatoes But no crap on them. No butter and cream—that's where all the calories come in "

"All the stuff I like

"Ten seconds on the lips, a lifetime on the hips I have a breakfast drink—carrot juice, celery juice, apple, banana, protein But you can have four egg whites a little cereal, and a piece of fruit. That's a hell of a breakfast It's simple, really People come up with these *zone* diets You can't mix this with that What a load of *bullcrap*! Stick to natural foods If man makes it, don't eat it Lunchtime. a turkey sandwich on whole wheat, no mayonnaise Some vegetable soup A salad with four or five raw vegetables Dinner a clear broth, piece of fish, steamed vegetables I generally have a salad with ten raw vegetables Keep away from sugar! It destroys your ability to think! Takes all the vitamins and minerals from your body! Just like alcohol You get a little lift for a few minutes, and then you get that down thing and need more."

"No ice cream?"

"I haven't had ice cream in sixty-eight years "

"What!"

"Closest I've come is nonfat frozen yogurt with some

Jack LaLanne's Ten Commandments

Thou shalt exercise the entire body vigorously for at least thirty minutes three to four days a week, changing programs every two weeks to avoid boredom

Thou shalt not exceed the feed limit of 2,000 calories a day when dieting, nor shalt thou ingest fat to exceed 25 percent of thy daily caloric intake.

Thou shalt take vitamins, minerals, and enzyme supplements daily

Thou shalt not consume alcohol or sugar to excess nor smoke tobacco.

Thou shalt count thy blessings Know how lucky thou art to live in America and know the truth about exercise and nutrition

Thou shalt not worry about things thou can't control

Thou shalt eat at least five raw vegetables and three raw fruits each day.

Thou shalt not neglect the spiritual side of life.

Thou shalt drink eight to ten glasses of water each day

Thou shalt not forget that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step

AARON GOODMAN

fruit." He saw my pain. "You've got to have a guilty conscience if you start eating ice cream. I want you to get that conscience. I want you to feel guilty. *Guilty!* If you can't afford a half hour three or four times a week, taking care of the most priceless possession there is on this earth—your body—you've got to be a damn fool. Let me ask you something. Would you get your dog up every day, give him a cup of coffee, a cigarette, and a doughnut? Hell no. *You'd kill the damn dog!*

"Follow this program and you're going to be more creative. Your heart will be strengthened. Your urine will be better. Your memory will be better. You'll sleep better. You'll make more money. Your sex life is going to be better."

"Sex life?"

"Sure. What is sex? Sex is giving. The more energy you have, the more you'll be able to give."

"Makes sense, Jack."

"Everything I tell you is one million percent the truth. It's been time proven. People tested."

"But why did you feel you had to tow seventy boats on your seventieth birthday in handcuffs and shackles?"

"Now I'm not comparing myself to Jesus, but why do you think Jesus was such a success? Because he performed miracles. This drew attention to his philosophy, which is why he had this terrific impact on civilization. I just want to help as many people as I can."

"Let me ask you something. Would you get your dog up every day, give him a cup of coffee, a cigarette, and a doughnut? Hell no. *You'd kill the damn dog!*"

"What are you thinking in the middle of these feats?"

"Exactly what I want you to think when you're doing your exercises. I think only about completing the goal. I think about stepping out of that water and people applauding. I think about telling myself: *Jack, you've done it again!*"

Adrenaline flushed through me, and I slapped my gut. "I'm ready, Jack!"

"Hallelujah, brother!"

IT WORKED. FOR FIVE WEEKS, I DID EXACTLY AS JACK ADVISED. I started exercising with only a few repetitions but added more daily. I put nothing in my body that wasn't holy according to the Gospel of Jack. Surprisingly, I wasn't overly sore at first. Nor was I hungry. For dessert, I mashed a banana and added a little lemon juice—just as Jack recommended. I drank seven glasses of water each day. My weight plummeted from 177 to 162. I was still ten pounds too heavy, but muscle tone was returning. I was crunching five hundred times a day. When I saw chocolate, I sneered. I felt like a million bucks as I slid into clothes that had mocked me for years. My wife was jubilant. And then I was invited to the Rainbow Room in New York by a friend who knows of my passion for desserts.

After the main course, the waiter came to the table balancing a tray that held a cantaloupe sorbet, a raspberry sorbet, a caramelized apple cream tart, a pumpkin farmer's cheese cake, and—Jack help me!—a maple praline crème brûlée.

My eyes watered, and I swear to God I saw the devil himself—horned, pitchforked, and two inches high—prancing from sorbet to brulée with a pearly-white grin. His voice was my own. "What is life without dessert?" he demanded. "Is that your idea of The Perfect Man?"

My intestines twitched. My mind quivered. Sure, *Jack* had a reason to crush the devil. He'd dropped out of school as a kid, was weak and underweight, and had twice tried to kill his brother after overdosing on sweets. His father had died at an early age in part because of poor nutrition. Jack *hated* himself until he heard a health lecture at fifteen and was reborn. In Jack's mind, the idea of putting a single M&M into his body even sixty-eight years later would only rekindle that sense of helplessness. But I had no such memories. Jack had bet his life on his theology and stuck with it when he could barely pay the rent and doctors were defaming him, claiming his workouts would cause hemorrhoids and heart attacks. The more people he converted, the more he pulverized the devil. But what about me? Me, whose dad still frolicked through three hours of tennis a day in his sixties. Me, who only used to try to *half* kill his brother?

I devoured every dessert on that table—then fled to my hotel. Guilty *guilty* GUILTY! I sprinted to the gym, crunched five hundred times, ran for half an hour, then crunched some more. The next morning, I weighed myself. I hadn't gained an ounce. *Shazam!* It hit me like Buddha under the banyan tree. I'd found my own way. The Middle Way.

Exercise with Jack and dance with the devil. I'd pass a week following Jack strictly, shave off a little more weight. But when a crème brûlee made from nine egg yolks and Tahitian vanilla beans appeared on the menu at Wolfgang Puck's, I swan dived into it. Then crunched seven hundred times to balance the scale. After three months, I'd lost twenty-five pounds. It wasn't exactly Alcatraz to Fisherman's Wharf handcuffed and shackled, but I'd achieved my goal.

I HAD ONE OF THOSE ONE-PIECE JUMPSUITS CUSTOM MADE FOR MY return visit to Jack's home. I was proud of my stomach, but it fluttered nonetheless as I approached the front door.

"Hello, skinny!" he boomed.

"Jack, you're a genius," I said, and he nodded his satisfaction as I told him everything—except about the desserts. But there is something so pure and truthful about Jack that I had to be honest, to tell him everything from Apple Pie to Death by Chocolate. And I did, bracing for the thunderbolt, the *Bullcrap!* right between the eyes.

But he shocked me. "Are you happy?" Jack asked.

"Yes."

"That's great. You look fantastic. You're in shape. People ask me about liposuction, and you know what I tell 'em? Sometimes, exercise can only do so much. Do everything you possibly can to feel as good as you can."

I ran my hands down my stomach, a happy, svelte, and religious man. "*Jack,*" I said, slapping him on the shoulder, "*you've done it again!*"

Next month: The Perfect Man learns how to smell by sniffing single-malt Scotch.



HARDWARE

TOOLS THAT WORK

So Much Cordless

Here's to the time your dad ran that nifty, newfangled electric hedge clipper through its power cord on the inaugural cut (and thank God for rubber handle grips). Since then, the power of electrons, captured like so many million genies in a bottle, has floated free from the cords that bind us to the grid. Here are some of the most ingenious and innovative tools for operating in a cellular, solid-state world that Dad could only dream of.



General Motors' EV1 Electric Car ($399 per month lease in California; $549 in Arizona) has a range of about 80 miles between charges and goes from zero to 50 in a noiseless 6.3 seconds. Fully recharges in less than six hours. Per-mile cost: about 2.5 cents. 800-253-5328



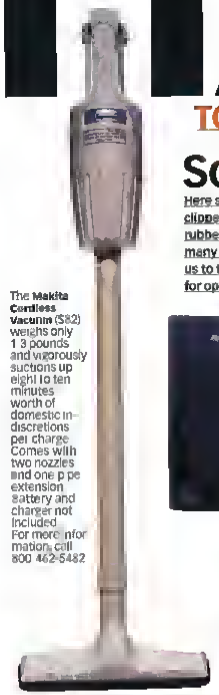
The **HelloSet Cordless 900 Telephone Headset** ($350) from Hello Direct makes for handless, too, and lets you wander up to 100 feet from home base. Comes with two hour rechargeable battery (six hour battery optional). Works with most telephones. 800-444-3556



The solar panel on the **SunWize Portable Energy System** ($350) gives new meaning to the phrase *field office*. It generates enough juice to operate most portable electronics—laptops, cell phones, and audio and video equipment. Weighs 2.5 pounds. 800-817-6527



Motorola TalkAbout Two-Way Radios ($148 each) keep you in touch with any number of compadres within a two-mile range via multiple channels of UHF FM. Works for 30 hours on three AA batteries. Optional mike for no-hands operation. 800-353-2729



The **Makita Cordless Vacuum** ($82) weighs only 1.3 pounds and vigorously suctions up eight to ten minutes' worth of domestic indiscretions per charge. Comes with two nozzles and one pipe extension. Battery and charger not included. For more information, call 800-462-5482.

EDITED BY GREG TURPAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVIES + STARR



Recoton's Wireless Indoor Speakers ($299) can be placed up to 150 feet away from their 20-watt transmitter. Rechargeable batteries will keep up your chosen racket for as long as 18 hours. Adjustable volume and bass on each speaker. 800-500-9266





The **BEL Express LJ Radar/Laser Detector** ($230) from Beltronics performs with consummate discretion. It won't betray you to Smokey's radar gun and has no dashboard cords that might agitate him if he does pull you over. 800-341-1401



The brand new **Black & Decker PartyMate Drinkmaker** ($40) will jumble one of your beach bag and whip up three gallons of crushed ice—and whatever summer trouble you want to add to that promising base—before it needs recharging, though it's not recommended for use with the EV1 electric car. 800-231-9786



Casco's IB KeyPoint Pro Wireless Keyboard ($70) and **IB Mouse** ($25) communicate with your PC or on-line TV with infrared light from more than 20 feet away. The duo will operate for dozens of hours on four AA and two AAA batteries, respectively. 800-793-6960



The **Porter-Cable Bammer Cordless Nailer** ($299), powered by compressed liquefied gas (fuel and self-sparking ignition (not a motor), can sink 3,000 2.5-inch finishing nails with each $7 fuel cell. No batteries, no charger, no bruised thumb. 800-487-8665



The **Porter-Cable 14.4-Volt Flashlight** ($22) is self-standing, with a head that swivels 110 degrees on the vertical. Its durable xenon bulb (with spare) will shed plenty of light on whatever darkness you face. Battery packs and charger not included. 800-487-8665



Alwa's 900MHz Wireless Rechargeable Headphones ($100) let you silently range, or rage, about the house—up to 150 feet from the receiver—in your very own mobile padded cell while the world is sleeping. Phones perch on transmitter for recharging. 800-478-4703



The **Makita Cordless Saw** ($303) chews through wood at 1,000 rpm. (Tile- and glass-cutting equipment are optional.) The base enables you to set a fixed cutting depth or angle a bevel cut at up to 45 degrees off the vertical. Weighs in at four pounds. 800-462-5482

Makita's 3/8-Inch Cordless Driver-Drill Kit ($410) twists out a macho 330 inch-pounds of torque through two variable-speed gears. It sports a forward/reverse switch and a keyless chuck that lets you change what's in the bit with your bare hands. Weighs 4.4 pounds. 800-462-5482



The **Black & Decker VersaPak Mini Purpose Cordless Inflator** ($40) fully pumps a car tire, an air mattress, or several bicycle tires on one charge. Built-in pressure gauge. Retractable air hose. Batteries and charger not included. 800-544-6986



The **Black & Decker Cordless Power Sprayer** ($99) will spread pretty much whatever you've got—fertilizers, poisons, sealants, cleaners—at the rate of seven to nine gallons per charge. Delivers a stream, a mist, or something in between at 20 psi through a six-foot hose and a fan or cone nozzle. 800-544-6986

The **Black & Decker CM4 1000 Lawn Mower** ($375) levels a third of an acre of lawn on one charge and then recharges to 70 percent of capacity in four hours—which is plenty of time to catch the game before finishing the job. And just think of it: You'll never have to jerk a starter cord again. 800-544-6986

Green

A Month in the Life of Your Money

By Ken Kurson

The New **Mergermania**

Some major players talk about how today's wave of deals is different from the boom of a decade ago

"Theresa, get me our transactions list."

The forty-sixth floor of Cravath, Swaine & Moore's Manhattan law offices has witnessed many of America's gargantuan deals, and Robert Kindler's corner office has been ground zero for most of them. The list Theresa brings reads like a highlight reel of 1990s mergers and acquisitions—WorldCom/MCI, Conrail/Norfolk/CSX, Lucent/AT&T, Boeing/McDonnell Westinghouse/Infinity, Morgan Stanley/Dean Witter, and many more—and includes more than $24 billion thus far in 1998. Kindler's table buckles beneath heartfelt letters from CEOs pleased with acquisitions or even more pleased to have survived takeover attempts. A signed share from the DreamWorks triumvirate occupies one wall, an article about Rob's brother Andy, vinegary anti-sellout comedian and host of Animal Planet's celebrity pet show, adorns the other. Kindler is easygoing and quick to smile, but he's deadly serious about his business, and his business is takeovers. "People think this is a game. It's not a game. We're talking about a lot of money. We're also talking about people's lives."



DAVIES + STARR

With 1998 buyouts already at the $688 billion mark through May, the $40 billion Chrysler/Daimler-Benz merger anchors what will certainly be another record year for M&A (compared with $917 billion for 1997, which was itself a record). No deal is unthinkable. These days, the government is expected to alter laws to suit the tastes of merging powerhouses. (Not allowed to sell insurance, banking, and investment products out of one shop? Says who?) Mixed marriages are commonplace and even national icons—say, car companies that play on patriotism as the cornerstone of their marketing—aren't immune to foreign propositions. After all, there's a fortune to be made.

If all this mating is starting to remind you of the swinging 1980s, lose the skinny tie and take that bandanna off your knee. These deals are very different, and the ways in which they are different provide insight into how investors might profit from playing them well.

For one thing, the premium paid by the acquirer is now finding its way into more hands via the mutual funds in every neckbone's 401(k) and IRA. So, unlike the debt financed, leveraged-buyout wave of a decade ago, this time stockholders, rather than junk-bond buyers, are reaping much of the premium. More important, today's takeover artists aren't of the slash-and-burn variety. The new-age deal is often spearheaded by those most able to add value to a target company via economies of scale and a stronger capital base.

Kindler knows that it's easy for investors outside these deals—or even lawyers inside them—to forget that real people are affected, and his voice rises as he crushes a wrist-building squeeze ball. "If I'm criticized for taking it personally, it's because it *is* personal. Go to the annual meeting of Cummins Engine. There, at an Indiana high school, are the *real* shareholders—the retirees and employees who rely on that company. Remember that almost every time there's a deal, shareholders vote on it. They're the owners of these companies—not the boards or the executives. And usually, they make the right choice."

Jack Furst is a principal of the Dallas buyout firm Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst. It does things the new way: "We look for companies with a lot of relative value. We look at a firm's underlying cash flow, the customer it serves, and whether it has a defensible business position. We look for management partners with plans that are rational, reasonable and executable, and we will not go into a transaction unless we have definitive ideas about what we're going to do." The strategy has been paying off beautifully, with each of the firm's three buyout funds having unearthed some gems, including Berg Electronics, Chancellor Media, and International Home Foods, with Simon & Schuster's reference business and lots of movie theaters joining the fray of late.

Furst's outline of what his firm looks for is an excellent primer on how regular investors can stalk takeover candidates. Indeed, the strategy played itself out right here in My War, Green's investment portfolio. I bought Specialty Teleconstructors, a firm that builds towers for cellular antennae on the premise that it was a good company whose real worth would be unlocked when someone with lots of money realized that it'd be cheaper to buy its unique construction expertise than build up a division from scratch. In other words, Specialty had a lot of "relative value," and indeed was taken over at a stock price in the high 30's just a few months after we bought it in the low teens. The acquirer? Hicks, Muse, Tate, & Furst.

Tony Magro, the Bear Stearns banker for Starwood in its successful but thorny lovers' tangle with Hilton over ITT, sees it like this:

Getting in on the Game

Six of the ten biggest deals of all time happened within the past twelve months. But putting all your chips on a hoped-for takeover target is a poor strategy. So how can regular investors participate?

- **Ask EDGAR.** The SEC requires investors to file 13D forms when amassing more than 5 percent of a company's shares. A careful reading of these forms (available free on the SEC's EDGAR site at www.sec.gov) can reveal clues about possible deals. Pay special attention to Item 4, Purpose of Transaction, and look for phrases like "with a view to possibly seeking to acquire the issuer."
- **Corrado Varoli,** head of Morgan Stanley's Latin American M&A department, thinks that privatization of government assets in emerging economies represents an interesting investment play. "Look at underdeveloped sectors that will have significant funds invested by overseas partners," he advises. "The twelve telecom companies created in Brazil, for example, will experience some M&A activity, so pick the ones with the best fundamentals and overseas relationships."
- **Jim Rogers,** bow tied world traveler, thinks that European industries formerly propped up by the smaller nations' governments are a great place to shop for takeover candidates. Defense and finance fit the bill. "Denmark has five million people. They don't *need* ten banks."
- **The only mutual fund** that specializes in M&A players is the Merger Fund, but it's closed to the public. However, some mutual funds have made a habit of selecting companies that are ripe for takeover. According to Morningstar, Michael Price's Mutual Series family of funds (Discovery, Qualified, Beacon, et al.) have an admirable record of picking companies with managements warm to the idea of being acquired. Beacon, for example, counts recent M&A players Chase, MCI, and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter among its top ten holdings. And Sage Online copresident Alan Cohn says that Janus Special Situations manager David Decker has a knack for identifying takeover targets.

Even **prescient** stock picks **may not** enjoy the **steep climb** that **past deals** have **triggered.**

My War: The Scorecard

A monthly look at my $10,000 real-money portfolio

		PRICE		GAIN/LOSS	VALUE
American Standard (ASD)	33	$1,272.36	48 ¼	$319.69	$1,592.65
Catalytica Inc (CTAL)	35	391.56	15 ⅛	150.94	542.50
Dodge & Cox Stock (DODGX)	26.41	2,500	100.6	157.15	2,657.15
MBNA (KRS)	–27	(732.38)	31 ⁹⁄₁₆	–123.18	–855.56
Mobil (MOB)	17	1,227.19	78	98.81	1,326
Nice Systems (NICEY)	10	460	36 ½	–95	365
Oxford Health (OXHP)	100	1,662.50	17 ¼	62.50	1,725
Specialty Teleconstructors (SCTR)	58	761.25	48	2,022.75	2,784
Summit Bank (SUMI)	20	1,037.50	50 ¼	–35	1,002.50
					$11,138.84
				CASH	931.33*
				PORTFOLIO NET WORTH AS OF 5/31	**$12,070.17**
				GAIN/LOSS SINCE LAST MONTH ($400.60)	**+5.24%**
				GAIN/LOSS FOR 1998	**+20.7%**
				S&P 500 FOR 1998	**+12.41%**

*Reflects $82 in commissions paid through 5/31

They say the most exciting play in baseball is the triple. Well, an investment triple is pretty nifty, too. Take Specialty Teleconstructors, which I bought on January 2, thought-fifty-eight shares at 13 ⅛. The stocks now at 48, and my shares are worth $2,784—more than triple my original $761.25 ($265.7 percent gain, to be exact). As a result, after edging ahead of the S&P 500 last month, the My War portfolio is now officially kicking tochos. While the S&P surrendered a couple points during May, My War gained 5 percent. Let's talk.

Back in February, analyst Mark Hulbert took the Motley Fool portfolio to task for owning most of its prodigious gains in just two stocks—Iomega and America Online. The Fools retorted by asking Hulbert to imagine the Bulls without Jordan and Pippen, and the Beatles without Lennon and McCartney. So the fact that SCTR has accounted for so much of My War's gain doesn't trouble me—I just wish I had seven more like it.

In this month's only trade, I finally covered my short position in Best Buy, delivering twenty shares at 67 ⅞ on May 4, thereby netting a $510 loss plus $8 commission. With the stock up about 60 percent since I shorted it at the beginning of the year, this is the worst haircut I've had since my high school mohawk. I maintain my doubts about Best Buy, but it more than fended off [illegible] like me—it sliced up good. Other news: MBNA, my remaining short, had a nice little drop since last month, but Nice [illegible] even more. And SBC Warburg Dillon Read moved its rating on last month's My War pick, Summit Bank, to an "outperform," setting a twelve-month price target of $56. Thanks, guys, for seconding my emotion.

Note: no all-out declines does the information in this column represent a recommendation to buy or sell [illegible] securities. The portfolio is for educational purposes only, and [illegible]

Green

"Investor confidence props up stock prices, which in turn funds deals, which in turn grows earnings, which continues to feed investor confidence. This 'virtuous cycle' has had an enormous effect on the aspirations of companies. And all indicators are that the business continues to explode."

A combination of other factors has created a nearly perfect climate for getting together:

- Booming markets allow the use of stock as currency and have also created lots of venture capital.
- Low real interest rates make it cheap to debt finance deals.
- Economies of scale and global reach are today considered critical, so conglomerates are regaining favor. Because companies are also trying to provide one-stop shopping, same-sector-different-service mergers (Citicorp/Travelers, for example) are popular.
- At the late stages of a booming economy investors have been conditioned to expect continually growing earnings. But low inflation limits companies' ability to raise product prices. As a result, having run out of ways to cut costs and sell more products, many big companies are looking to acquisitions as a quick way to spike growth.

Given this atmosphere, more deals are surely on the way. But investors ought to be wary of speculating too aggressively. For one thing, a takeover premium is by now already built into the stock price of many companies in the sectors that have seen the most activity, such as finance and telecommunications. So even prescient stock picks might not enjoy the steep climb that past deals have triggered.

Another factor is that fewer hostile takeovers—typically the most lucrative for shareholders of target companies—are expected in the coming years. Ironically, one reason is the very acceptance of what had been a taboo tactic. As Jonathan Foster, who heads up LBO efforts at Lazard Freres, explains, "GE came after Kemper. AT&T bought NCR, and IBM gobbled up Lotus. When three of America's leading companies went hostile, it became open season." Once the stigma of hostile bidding eased, in other words, so many companies entered the fray that it became too expensive a technique. Robert Kindler puts it more simply: "When a client walks through the door and says they're thinking about a hostile bid, I tell them flat out, 'It won't work unless a) you can afford to pay more than any other potential bidder and b) the reason you can is that you bring something uniquely valuable to the table in terms of business synergy.'" Which explains the successful hostile bid for MCI. Neither GTE nor British Telecom could match WorldCom's price for MCI *and* its inroads into local phone markets as a complement to MCI's long distance and Internet businesses.

Furthermore, the American M&A juggernaut is not the only game in town. "We think the U.S. has a lot of upside left," Jack Furst says, "but the rest of the world has a *ton* of upside."

More than half of Cravath's M&A business is now with foreign clients. While some focus on emerging markets as fertile ground, I think Europe, with the advent of the euro and the crumbling of national barriers, is the place to look. Hicks, Muse is opening its first European office in London, and Lazard's LBO business is now concentrated in Europe as well. Jim Rogers, on what must have been his millionth mile on his exercise bike, put it this way: "These old European companies have been around for centuries and have umpteen divisions for no strategic reason. They're just starting to learn about shareholder value. Five years ago, if you had told a German CEO that he should split his stock, he'd have thought it was illegal. And companies' buying back their own stock *was* illegal. We're talking about an economy and population bigger than America's. And things are just starting to get under way there. Once it's rolling, it won't stop."

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Professional athletes are renowned for their financial acumen, of course. No wonder, then, that with interest rates low and competition fierce, mortgage lenders are tripping over one another to sign them up as pitchmen.



Dan Dierdorf, NFL icon/color man
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"You don't need money in the bank to get money *from* a bank."



Dan Marino, quarterback
FirstPlus Financial
Can't-miss Catchphrase
"You don't need equity. You just need a phone."

Phil Rizzuto, Scooter and **Jim Lampley**, broadcaster
National Finance Corp
National Finance, which specializes in "subprime lending" to those with spotty credit histories, says "It gives us a lot of credibility from the standpoint of having Jim Lampley and Phil Rizzuto involved." (Scooter pitched for the Money Store from 1972 to 1992.)



Jim Palmer, Hall of Fame pitcher/underwear model
The Money Store
Can't-miss Catchphrase
"One low monthly payment."





Bill Elliott, Nascar owner/driver and **Jerry Nadeau**, driver
FirstPlus Financial
"FirstPlus is a leader in consumer lending throughout the U.S.," reads a company press release. "Partnered with this kind of leadership and ability, we think this program will grow to be a leader on the racetrack."



Terry Bradshaw
born again quarterback/commentator
The Associates
Bradshaw sings the Associates jingle.



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—Steve Crawford, Dallas, TX

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[continued from page 77] adding that she was a very special woman who deserved to be happy.

It was years before Amy admitted what she had done. They were relatively uneventful years for the family but, I imagine, a very confusing period of time for poor Penny Midland, who was frequently visited at the art gallery by my father and any number of his divorced business associates.

"Here's the gal I was telling you about," he'd say to Bob Sweety or Tommy Lathermore. "I think the two of you would make a dynamite couple, I swear to God. Maybe some night this week the two of you could ship away and have a few drinks. Give it a try, why don't you?"

The passage of time has not altered my father's obsessive attention to my sisters' weight and appearance and because of that, most of them keep their distance, checking in mainly by phone. "Is it just my imagination," he'll ask, "or has your voice gotten fatter? You sound chubby to me. Is everything okay?"

Because she has maintained her beautiful skin and youthful figure, Amy is my father's greatest treasure. She is by far the most attractive member of our family, yet she's spent most of her life dreaming of skin diseases and praying for a hump. Compliments are genuinely lost on her. She can't see any benefit to being attractive and is constantly searching for what she considers a flattering disguise. She's got all the neck braces and false teeth a person could want and recently spent a good deal of money on a customized padded "fatty suit" she enjoys wearing beneath sweatpants as tight and unrevealing as sausage casing. She couldn't afford the sun's matching top and is reduced to waddling the streets much like two women fused together in some sort of cruel experiment. From the waist up, she's slim and fit, chugging forward on legs the size of tree trunks and followed by a wide, dumpled bottom so thick she could sit on a knitting needle and never feel a thing.

Amy wore her fatty suit home last Christmas, when our startled heartbroken father met us at the airport. He managed to stifle his disapproval on the short ride to the house, but the moment she stepped into the bathroom, he turned to me, shouting, "What the hell has happened to her? Christ almighty, this is tearing me apart! I'm in real pain here."

"What?"

"Your sister, that's what. The girl's ass is the size of a beanbag chair! I thought you were supposed to be keeping an eye on her!"

I begged him to lower his voice. "Please. Dad, don't mention it in front of her. Amy's very sensitive about her— you know."

"Her what? Go ahead and say it: *her big fat ass.* That's what she's ashamed of, and she should be! Christ almighty, you could land a chopper on an ass like that!"

"Oh, Dad."

"Don't try to defend her, wiseguy. She's a single woman and the clock is ticking away. How's she supposed to find a husband with an ass like that?"

"Well," I said, "a lot of men *like* that."

He looked at me with great pity and shook his head. "What you don't know could fill a book."

My father composed himself when Amy reentered the room, but the moment she opened the freezer door, he acted as though she were tossing a lit match into the gas tank of his Porsche. "What in God's name are you doing? Look at you, you're killing yourself!"

Amy hugged a quart of ice cream to her chest and searched the drawers for a shovel-sized spoon.

"Your problem is you're bored," my father said. "You're bored and lonely, and you're eating garbage in order to fill some kind of stinking void. I know what you're going through and, believe me, you can lick this."

"First of all," Amy said, "I'm not bored. And besides, all I've eaten today is a stack of pancakes, four doughnuts, a Danish at the airport, and a couple of really small brownies on the plane."

She kept it up until my father, his voice cracking with pain, offered to find her some professional help. "I'm begging you to reach out before it's too late. We can do it together. There are programs and camps that specialize in this kind of thing, but first you need to admit that you have a problem."

When Amy rejected his offer, he attempted to set an example. Sitting down to Christmas dinner, he pretended to be satisfied with nothing but a sliver of white meat and a single spear of broccoli. His age-old athletic regime became theatrical. "That felt *great*," he'd say, finishing a round of sit-ups. "Now I'll do some squat thrusts, a few dozen push-ups, and then it's off for a quick run. Anyone want to join me? Amy?"

She kept to her fatty suit until her legs were chafed and pimpled. It was on the morning of our return flight that she finally revealed her joke, and our father, bracing himself against the countertop, wept with delight. "Ha-ha," he laughed, as though he were reading the words off a page, the way he's always done. "Ha, ha, ha. You really had me going. Ha, ha. I *knew* you'd never let yourself go."

He reflected upon the fatty suit for the next several months. "She had me fooled for a minute there, but even with a huge ass you can't disguise the fact that she's a beautiful person, and that's what really matters." His epiphany was short-lived, and, as the photo shoot approached, he called, asking, "Do you happen to know if they're going to be hiring a professional stylist? I sure as hell hope so, because her hair is awfully thin, and someone needs to talk her into losing those bangs."

There's a lot I don't tell my father when he calls asking after Amy. He wouldn't understand that she has no interest in getting married and was, in fact, quite happy to break up with her live-in boyfriend.

The last time she was asked out by a successful bachelor, she hesitated for a few moments before saying, "Thanks for asking, but I'm just really not into white guys right now."

This alone would have given my father an aneurysm. "The clock is ticking!" he says. "If she waits much longer, she'll be alone for the rest of her life."

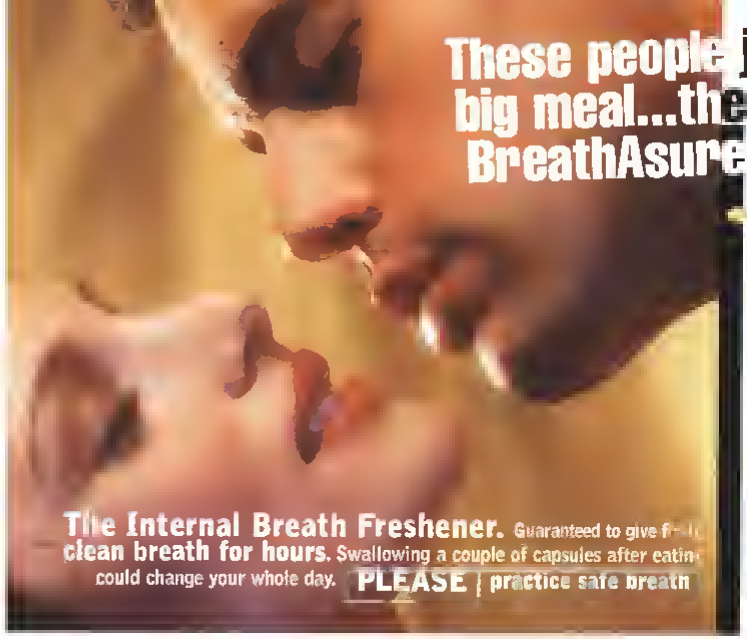
This appears to suit Amy just fine.

When my father called, asking about the photo shoot, I feigned ignorance. I didn't tell him that at the scheduled time my sister arrived at the studio with unwashed hair and took her place beside a half dozen women who were carefully dressed in flattering outfits. She waited while the others had their hair molded into the current fashion. One by one, their brows were trained while beauticians made the most of their hair and cheekbones.

When called forth to the styling table, Amy said, "I want to look like someone has beaten me up really really bad."

The makeup artist did a fine job. The black eyes and purpled jaw were accentuated by a series of scratch marks on her forehead. Puss-yellow pools surrounded her blistered nose, and her swollen lips were fenced with mean rows of blackish stitches.

Amy was enchanted with her new look. Following the photo shoot, she wore her bruises to the dry cleaner and grocery store. Most people nervously looked away, but on rare occasions someone would ask what happened, and my sister would smile as brightly as possible, saying, "I'm in love. Can you believe it? I'm finally totally in love, and it feels great!" ■



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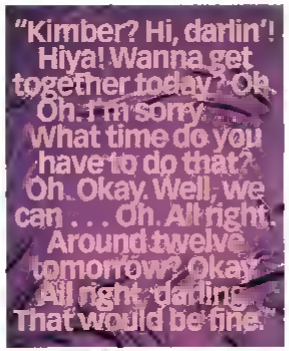


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[continued from page 66] never was a Barbi Benton which caused no small injury Things do come up always have and will So there would be anger and then the instinct to flee and then fight and then more anger over having had to flee

They have, of course been seeing a marriage counselor He has been all for it. In fact the very next Friday they were in session together when she said something and he said something and she stormed out of the room and called her attorney and instructed that divorce papers be drawn up and "irreconcilable differences" be used as the complaint The attorney obediently filed petition at the Los Angeles County Court House that afternoon Somehow she neglected to tell her husband about this he learned of it from a Playboy publicity executive the next Monday, after a weekend during which he and Kimberley had made amends Also, she forgot to tell the lawyer to rescind the papers Then the media got wind of the filing Together the Hefners instantly issued a statement "This filing took place in a moment of misunderstanding We are still exploring a reconciliation and neither of us wants a divorce" The incident would soon become known around the Mansion as the Miscommunication (Mary O'Connor "What happened? Nothing happened It's the same as before—the same bullets the same ducking the same kissy kiss—nothing's changed He's okay") Then the following week the missus bolted town for New York and was photographed at a Knicks game seated beside Donald Trump She had confessed earlier to me that Trump—who apparently smelled blood in the water—started calling her from the moment the separation news hit in January "Hey listen" she assured me, "I know exactly what the Donald is all about! The tabloids, one imagines reacted just as Trump may have wished (*The National Enquirer* DUCK, OONALD!! HUGH HEFNER'S HOT & WANTS HIS WIFE BACK) After returning to Los Angeles, she assumed slypose and told me, "I don't wanna say anything I can't. But I would really appreciate it if you could get it in somewhere that I am definitely not in love with the Donald That would be good." Hef, meanwhile was not "hot" so much as exasperated He would explain his wife's public assignation thusly "Her decision to go off with the *Donald*"—there is disdain in the italics—"came about because she got pissed at me But she got pissed at me for nothing just because I went out the night before and ran into a Playmate that she has a particular thing about" But he was slightly shaken "Well, she didn't *make* it with him!" he told his Wednesday card cronies when they asked He also told them that her jaunt wasn't the worst thing that could have happened "It just takes the heat off of me"

Never mind that it is now his seventy-second birthday Never mind the lengthening shadows of December bullshit He may not want to fight with his wife—and he won't—but he will continue to fight that bastard mortality (What have all the young women in his life been but proof of that?) Mortality "Why go quietly?" he says I think we should all go kicking and screaming" When he does go he will sleep forever with Marilyn Monroe, right next to her, in his drawer at the Westwood Memorial mausoleum He bought the space a few years ago could not resist. At long last, he could recline with his magazine's first cover girl and centerfold, the one whose nude calendar pictures he discovered and bought for a song begetting all romantic adventures to come "I love those kinds of symbolic pieces



fitting together" he says Likewise, he loves that his son Marston, like him was born on April 9 "Magic!" says Hef

No his birthday is about *rejuvenation* Before the day is over, he will receive the gift of Viagra and know rejuvenation like never before It is the Thursday before Easter weekend—symbolic! bunnies! more magic!—and he has opened the Mansion for a lunchtime reunion of actual Playboy Bunnies to celebrate the publication of *The Bunny Years* a smart oral history of the original women who wore ears and tails for him "What a wonderful way to start a birthday!" he announces The media prowls and Hefner is aglow proud as the peacocks patrolling his lawn, the ladies aged forty to sixty-ish, fawn all over him He has dated most of them, slept with several—many had living quarters in the old Chicago house—and it is clear that they loved him then and still do "We can open up a new Bunny Dorm!" he says pluckily They squeal "All right! We're movin in!" Hef "Works for me! Always did!"

That night before screening a long film retrospective of highlights from previous birthdays, he tells the Gang that he will show *Saturday Night Fever* on Saturday night—to be followed by an authentic Playboy Mansion disco party! His first since, well, *whenever!* The group whoops, claps cheers "The old days" he promises them, "are returning!" Evidence Tonight he is not alone on his massive couch nor would he be all weekend—Jaime Bergman snuggles beside him He shares his specially hand popped popcorn with her—sharing—and nuzzles her neck intermittently Many former Playmates are present as well, reliving Mansion memories from the retrospective Ex Special Lady Shannon Tweed is here—"I wanted to see this part this was before my time"—with her companion Gene Simmons of the rock group Kiss Jessica Hahn who once lived here tells me in the Great Hall "He gave me my life"

They would all say as much, these ladies they disrobed for the world on Hefner's behalf and he would forever cloak them with gratitude, with concern. A dozen of them wander out to the terrace after the film and the champagne and the caviar after the Gang has serenaded the birthday boy and Bob Culp has reprised his exultant Manly Night toast ("Gentlemen gentlemen be of good cheer for they are out there, and we are in here!") They sit outdoors at tables, these beautiful women, and talk and smoke and drink for an hour before Hef finally strolls out He is feeling fine and mischievous "Are you girls waiting to use the Jacuzzi?" And they peal with delight He sits with them for a while. And then some of them aren't sitting there anymore, and neither is he They are gone It is, after all his birthday

The original idea was to hold a little family thing yesterday he tells me on the day after his birthday But at the last minute, it conflicted with Kimberley's plans" Because it was also Marston's birthday she took the kids and their favorite cousins to Knott's Berry Farm So there was no family birthday thing, about which he is stoic, as he must be—at least he was able to attend Marston's laser-tag party the evening before their birthday (Hef firing a laser gun! He felt like Buck Rogers!) He says they will try to regroup later this afternoon He also says he cannot count on it She changes plans every hour They were supposed to be together a few nights earlier "She bowed out We didn't do it But that's not a surprise to me Every day is different I only believe it when it happens" His tone is not angry but matter-of-fact We are in the Library and he is missing her, and he is missing them, and he would rather have that life back, because it took him so long to get there and to get them But he cannot say that exactly He says "I just don't want to go back to the way it was before Living two lives" He says he has never favored his friends over his family, which is her belief which he calls a fantasy He says it would be useless to cancel his movie nights for her "If you understand the nature of the full psychological implications of her wanting that you'll understand part of the problem Which is that *that* isn't love That isn't even wanting to spend time with a person That's a *power play*. The reality is, *I wouldn't be spending time with her anyway* I'd be *alone* She would be busy doing her own things" He says this because he knows this. He has been alone, and he never was any good at it He hadn't been alone for a long time until he got married. Very quietly he says, "It's the opposite of a real commitment." And then the phone on the desk rings and it is she, returning his call, and he says "Kimber? Hi darlin'! Hiya! Wanna get together today? Oh Oh I'm sorry What time do you have to do that? Oh Okay Well, we can Oh All right Around twelve tomorrow? Okay All right, darling That would be fine Okay"

Hef Healing Night, Three He always preferred it this way It works better this way He went out and saw their world now they have come to see his They have come in great masses beautiful women and young famous people, and they intermingle with the wide-eyed Gang Disco music throbs in the Great Hall whose walls melt and swirl with colored lights If they want retro he will show them retro He wears his white Armani suit and dances with lovely ladies whose faces are flecked in glitter who drape boas around his neck and shimmy before him And here is Leonardo DiCaprio, all agog, acting as though he were shaking hands with the real king of the world "Mr Hefner I couldn't be happier to meet you and to be in your house!" Leonardo's dream he tells his host, is to be in the Grotto, in the Jacuzzi at 3:00 A.M. Leonardo understands where he is Hef nods and tells him "If those rocks could talk" Leonardo goes out to the pool and stares reverentially into the Grotto while women stare, in kind at him. But now here is Billy Zane, also of *Titanic*. And Tori Spelling Pauly Shore, and God knows who else—they're all so young! And one by one, they all go out to the pool and stare into the Grotto as if it were the cave from which Christ emerged nearly two thousand years ago this very morning But nobody gets in the water And Hef does not stop dancing until well after two And when he climbs the stairs, he is not alone He is lousy at alone ■

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[continued from page 57] case" (as though I were in some way obligated to participate in his rehabilitation). This is on top of other calls I've gotten from well-meaning domestic-violence counselors who are routinely given these cases and from an investigator for the stalker's defense, who even showed up at my apartment and asked me to reconsider pressing charges because the stalker may not know what he's doing."

I continue to get mail as well, even though the stalker is being held in psychiatric custody. I collect it all. Evidence. Proof that the stalker is not going to stop.

SPRING 1996 I receive a telegram from the psychiatric center, informing me that the stalker is ready to be released. I am being "duly notified" and should respond by calling his social worker and psychiatrist. When I do, they both assure me that their patient has been "docile as a little puppy," showing no signs of his "earlier psychotic behavior." They ask, "How do you feel about his release?" Followed by, "Do you know how to protect yourself?"

I have by this time changed my old number over to a fax line. It begins ringing incessantly, though no faxes come through. My neighbors start telling me they have spotted the stalker nearby.

JANUARY 1997 On my way home from the two six, where I've just met the new detectives assigned to my case and delivered the latest pieces of stalker mail, the cab slows to a stop on my corner and I see him through the window, hiding behind his usual pay phone.

I tell the driver to circle the block and pull up in front of Mama Joy's, my neighborhood deli, where they let me use the phone. I watch through the window of the store as the police come and take him away. A pathetic little encounter. The stalker slouches patiently while the detectives get out of the car and he accompanies them placidly as if he wants to be arrested.

My fax line continues to ring without producing incoming faxes. Later, the calls are traced to a phone in a holding cell at Riker's Island.

This time, instead of a residential psychiatric program, the stalker gets sentenced to a year in jail.

OCTOBER 1997 While running errands a few blocks from my apartment, I think I see him. When I reach the assistant DA, she tells me "It's him. He got credit for time served and is already out."

That afternoon the mail arrives with an envelope from the stalker that contains several brochures on contraceptive devices and an elementary-school photo of him. He is arrested again within days.

JUNE 1998 There have been more violations, more court orders and three grand jury appearances. I'm now on my third assistant DA. The first two having already moved on to other jobs. The stalker sits in jail at the moment, and although he's had his phone and mail privileges revoked, he still manages to send me gift subscriptions to *Gallery* and *Playboy* and he still calls my fax number staying on the line for several minutes, even though all he can hear is the ear-piercing fax tone.

The stalker is now undergoing another psychiatric evaluation. If he doesn't plead guilty to the latest charges and waive his right to trial, the case will go before a jury. The stalker has violated court orders so many times that the charge is now criminal contempt, a felony. What may have gotten the stalker into trouble is his harassment of me, but what's elevated his charges from misdemeanor to felony is his chronic contempt of court. If convicted, the stalker could face more than twenty years in jail.

I've been thinking about the trial and what it will be like to appear on the witness stand. I worry about that. I don't want to be in the same room with the stalker—not even a courtroom. I know that I should try to describe how eight years of unrelenting anxiety have damaged me in ways I suspect I'll never repair. I now live in a state of permanent distraction. My short-term memory is shot. I've spent so many years having to plan each errand, every foray into the city, that there are moments now when I become lost. Just last week, I had to call a good friend so that she could tell me how to get back to my apartment from Broadway and Tenth. I mean, I know where I live. I just forgot how to get there. I'm not sure I will be able to do justice to the experience without breaking down something I am loath to do. Especially in front of the stalker. That's the problem. My case will be helped if I allow the court to see the impact the stalker has had on me, yet I don't want to give him the satisfaction of hearing it. Not from me, anyway. The only thing I have to say in front of the stalker is that if I'm lucky he'll die in jail.

Sometimes I find myself reconsidering the early advice people gave me—advice I was determined not to heed until I'd gotten the police to protect me. Not long ago I looked up shooting ranges in the Yellow pages. I want to know what it feels like to shoot a gun. And there are times when I walk around New York and imagine myself living in another neighborhood. But I have no definite plans.

Just the other day I received an envelope in the mail from the stalker. It was empty. My name and address appeared on the front as usual but on the back, in the same lunatic scrawl, he'd written something new—a short message. *Fuck you.* ■



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credits

Fashion **Man at His Best**, p. 26 Paul Smith T-shirt at Paul Smith New York. Boss Hugo Boss Bodywear **briefs** at Neiman Marcus nationwide. Bloomingdale's nationwide. Macy's West. Donna Karan **socks** at Saks Fifth Avenue nationwide. Brooks Brothers **T-shirt** at Brooks Brothers nationwide. Polo Ralph Lauren **boxers** at Macy's nationwide. Bloomingdale's nationwide. Helmut Lang **T-shirt** at Helmut Lang, New York. Barneys New York, New York. Calvin Klein **boxer briefs** at Macy's nationwide. Bloomingdale's nationwide. Burdines nationwide. Ralph Lauren Purple Label **socks** at Polo Ralph Lauren, New York. Giorgio Armani **T-shirt** at Giorgio Armani nationwide. Jockey **boxer briefs** at better department stores. Dockers **socks** at Macy's nationwide.

Not Your Typical Business Suit, p. 90 Joseph Abboud **suit** at Saks Fifth Avenue select stores. Nordstrom select stores. Mitchell's, Westport, CT. Etro **suit** at Neiman Marcus select stores. Bergdorf Goodman Men, New York. Valentino **suit** at Valentino Boutique, New York and Beverly Hills. **P. 91** Versace **suit** at Versace nationwide. **P. 92** Brioni **suit** at Brioni, New York. Saks Fifth Avenue, New York. Boss Hugo Boss **suit** at Boss Hugo Boss, Short Hills, NJ, and Washington, DC. Saks Fifth Avenue select stores. Dolce & Gabbana **suit** at Saks Fifth Avenue select stores. Ermenegildo Zegna **suit** at Ermenegildo Zegna nationwide. Carroll & Co., Beverly Hills. **P. 93** Tommy Hilfiger Collection **suit** at Tommy Hilfiger, Beverly Hills.

Sort of English but Better, p. 108 Burberrys **trench coat** at Burberrys nationwide. Etro **trousers** at Etro, New York. Bergdorf Goodman Men, New York. Neiman Marcus select stores. Polo by Ralph Lauren **turtleneck** at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York and East Hampton, NY. Dolce & Gabbana **lace-ups** at Dolce & Gabbana, Houston and New York. **P. 110** Ermenegildo Zegna **jacket**, **turtleneck** and **trousers** at Ermenegildo Zegna nationwide. Marines, Portland, OR, and Seattle. **P. 111** Polo by Ralph Lauren **jacket** at Polo/Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills, Bloomingdale's, New York. Macy's, New York. **Turtleneck** at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York. **Trousers** at Bloomingdale's, New York. Macy's, New York. Lord & Taylor, New York. Dolce & Gabbana **lace-ups** at Dolce & Gabbana, Houston and New York. **P. 113** Nautica by David Chu **suit** at Lord & Taylor select stores. Macy's select stores. Dayton Hudson select stores. DKNY **turtleneck** at DKNY, Las Vegas. Atrium, New York. Saks Fifth Avenue select stores. **P. 114** Boss Hugo Boss **jacket**, **turtleneck** and **trousers** at Boss Hugo Boss. Short Hills, NJ, and Washington, DC. Saks Fifth Avenue select stores. Dolce & Gabbana **lace-ups** at Dolce & Gabbana, Houston and New York. **P. 116** Dolce & Gabbana **turtleneck** and **trousers** at Dolce & Gabbana, New York. **P. 117** Calvin Klein Collection **suit** at Macy's West. Bergdorf Goodman select stores. Saks Fifth Avenue select stores. New York Industrie by Staff Int'l **sweater** at Saks Fifth Avenue, New York. Ricardo, Best Traffic, Los Angeles.

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checkmate

By Mark Richard

Someone very close to me asked me what kind of gift I would make for her to celebrate our twelfth year together on a deserted island.

You mean just you and me on this island? I asked.

Deserted, except for us.

Does it have like vegetables and a jungle, or is it just one of those round, bald-headed-man islands you see in the cartoons?

Be realistic, she said. It has supported us for twelve years.

So it has a beach and freshwater and fish and stuff, I said, and she said, *what* kind of gift would you make for me to celebrate our twelve years alone together?

I could make something, I don't know, maybe a shell necklace with a string with some shells on it, I don't know.

A shell necklace, she said.

I don't know, I said. I guess.

Well, here's what I'd make for you, she said. She said that after our plane had gone down and she had rescued me out of the surf like in *Lord of the Flies*, she'd learned how to put a keen edge on a stone knife, and that with the stone knife she'd carve a complete chess set of pawns and castles and bishops and queens on pegs, so you could play on a board drawn in the sand. It would be really neat, she said, maybe even use sea horses for the knights if she could figure a way to fasten them onto the sticks without messing up their tails.

That sounds nice, I said. I said, the only problem is is that you hate chess and don't even want to learn to play by the rules.

That's the best part, she said. She said she'd secretly make her king's peg longer than the rest, and much sharper, too, and the king himself would be just sort of a handle for the long, sharp stick stuck in the sand board. Of course, you wouldn't really notice how long and sharp the stick was because, being a king, he wouldn't be moving around that much except at the end of the game, she said.

What about if you wanted to castle? I asked, and she said she didn't know what "to castle" meant. No, she said, her king would just stay put and wait until I checkmated her.

Then when I checkmate your king, then what? I said.

She said then she'd draw the king out of the ground like a dagger and stab me with it in the neck and chest. I'd do it furiously, she said.

I thought about her gift.

I said, I guess the thing for me to do is just not to ever win at chess, to just never beat you, I said.

No, she said, you could never *not* beat me at something if you could. Besides, she said, you wouldn't know about the king until you had me checkmated.

I guess that's right, I said.

Damn right, she said. Some gift, huh?

Sundial, I said, after a little while.

Sundial? she said.

Yeah. It's just a large sharpened stake stuck in the sand to mark time.

Sundial! she said.

That's right, I said, and she kicked sand past me, running into the jungle to make one. ■



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